

A SHINTO SHRINE TURNED LOCAL:  
THE CASE OF KOTOHIRA JINSHA DAZAIFU TENMANGU AND ITS  
ACCULTURATION ON O'AHU

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## **ABSTRACT**

This project examines the institution of Hawai'i Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu in Honolulu as an example of a New Religious Movement. Founded in Hawai'i, the shrine incorporated ritual practices from Sect Shinto customs brought to the islands by Japanese immigrants. Building on the few available scholarly studies, I hypothesize that while Hawai'i Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu takes the ritual conduct, priestly training, and the festival calendar from a Japanese mainland style of Shinto, the development of the shrine since its foundation in 1920 to the present reflects characteristics of a New Religious Movement. Elements such as the location of the shrine outside of Japan, attendee demographics, non-traditional American and Hawaiian gods included in the pantheon, the inclusion of English as the lingua-franca during festivals and rituals, and the internal hierarchy and structure (both political and physical) lend to the idea of Hawaiian Shinto being something unique and outside of the realm of Sect, Shrine, or State Shinto in Japan.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Local Scholarship Review, the Hawaiian Islands, and Claims

From time immemorial, the people of Japan have worshipped *kami*. It is difficult to pin down specific dates for the genesis of early Japanese rituals and beliefs about Kami, but the history of Shinto practice by Japanese immigrants in Hawai'i is a path of scholarship even less traveled. Two twenty-first century academic studies in the field of religion have zeroed in on the provocative and peculiar niche that local Shinto shrines have carved out for themselves in the Hawaiian Islands, and the more important of these, "For the Protection and Benefit of the People: A History of Shinto in Hawai'i" by Paul G. Gomes III, which was submitted as a Masters thesis in Religion at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa in 2007. Most of the sources in Gomes's project consist of newspaper articles, undocumented University records based on undergraduate research, and publications by members of the Hawai'i Shinto League or the priests themselves. Because of the dearth of published academic histories of Shinto in Hawai'i, Gomes's research is incredibly valuable for providing context for Shinto groups with respect to Hawaiian and international affairs in the late nineteenth through the twentieth centuries. In his work, Gomes coins the expression '*Kama'aina Shinto*,' meaning the Shinto practices of the people of Hawai'i.<sup>1</sup> The thesis encompasses the narrative of immigrants

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<sup>1</sup> Gomes III, Paul G. *For the Protection and Benefit of the People: A History of Shinto in Hawai'i*. Master's Thesis. University of Hawai'i. 2007. (9-10)

The word *Kama'aina* literally translates to 'people of the land' (i.e. Hawai'i) and is central to Gomes' discussion of the development of Shinto in Hawai'i. Discussing Shinto in terms of the relationship between the *aina* and the cultural practices of Japanese people in Hawai'i binds the land and religious practitioners together.

as early as 1885, and finishes reporting on modern cultural assimilation-oriented newsletters as recent as 2005, just two years prior to the project's submission. Wilburn Hansen submitted the second major work, an academic publication titled, "Examining Prewar Tôgô Worship in Hawaii: Toward Rethinking Hawaiian Shinto as a New Religion in America," in *Nova Religio; The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* in 2010. Hansen's work argues that a *kokutai* ritual in honor of Japanese Naval Admiral Tôgô conducted at Hawai'i Daijingu Temple was not a nationalist cult-practice. Instead, Hawai'i Daijingu Temple was simply appealing to the religious market in Hawai'i, which was largely made up of Isei and Nisei.<sup>2</sup> In the 1930s, groups like Hawai'i Daijingu focused on appealing to the sense of Japanese identity that attendees, both immigrant and visiting Japanese national alike, desired to connect with when attending local shrines.<sup>3</sup>

There are a few other contributions ancillary to this research that explore other facets of Hawaiian Shinto. In 2012, "The Japanese and Okinawan American Communities and Shintoism in Hawaii: Through the Case of Izumo Taishakyo Mission of Hawaii" was submitted as a Masters Thesis by Kinjo Sawako in the department of American Studies. While this addition to Hawaiian Shinto scholarship was quite thorough and well articulated, it deals primarily with issues of Okinawan-American heritage and descriptive history of the shrine, and neither addresses nor argues the religious elements of the shrine beyond its description. As will follow in the first chapter of this thesis

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<sup>2</sup> Isei and Nisei refer to the first wave immigrants and their offspring from Japan to Hawai'i in the late 19th thru the early 20th century.

<sup>3</sup> Hansen, Wilburn. Examining Prewar Tôgô Worship in Hawaii Toward Rethinking Hawaiian Shinto as a New Religion in America. *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 14, no. 1 2010. (67-92)

project relating to KJDT, Kinjo too outlines the history of the Japanese presence in Hawai'i as it relates to Izumo Taisha. The religious function of Izumo Taisha is, according to Kinjo, in large part a kind of cultural preservation that is consistently influenced and overseen by priests and functionaries who are constantly either traveling to or in contact with Izumo Taisha representatives in Japan. Kinjo further notes the highly populous Okinawan patronage of Honolulu's Izumo Taisha, and that the priests have made a concerted effort to travel to Okinawa, and even enshrine Okinawan *kami*. Kinjo's study is quite useful as a model study of a specific Hawaiian shrine, but is more focused on the evolution of an American immigrant community than it is on the characteristics of the religion itself. Lastly, Maeda Takakazu published *Hawaii no Jinjashi* in 1999, and this project is cited in all three of the aforementioned pieces of scholarship. Maeda's book describes in great detail the historical developments of Hawaiian Shinto shrines, but does so in Japanese. The majority of people in Hawai'i, including those who attend local shrines, do not have an academic level of mastery of Japanese sufficient to read Maeda, and Gomes's research is one of the few, if not the only available comprehensive history of Hawaiian Shinto in English.

The reasons for this are simple: Shrines in Hawai'i weathered storms of public scrutiny, government repossession of land, and internment and deportation of priests in the years immediately preceding and following the Pacific War. Some shrines disbanded completely or closed temporarily as a result of government pressure. It follows logically that benefactors and priests would want to avoid subjecting their institutions to further persecution, by opening dialogues with government officials, or even journalists. While

academics are not necessarily connected to government bodies or journalistic institutions, Shinto communities and leaders have similar reasons to keep scholars at an arm's length, since, before and after the Pacific War, community outsiders potentially posed a threat. Additionally, shrines are not typically active in the area of proselytization. Taking all of this into account, it becomes clear exactly why there is little scholarship or public records of Hawaiian shrine activities from the immediate postwar period; members of the Hawai'i Shinto communities have little incentive or motivation to broadcast their cultural practices. Luckily, some communities have more recently opened themselves up to the idea of research projects featuring their tradition, and the following research is in part the product of this newfound openness.

Other than Gomes and Hansen, Nakajima Michio describes shrines beyond the reach of the former Japanese territories as important areas for further research, and as sites that were outside the jurisdiction of the Imperial Shinto project.<sup>4</sup> Nakajima, along with Hansen, focuses on the elements that drove the development of State Shinto (*kokka Shintō* 国家神道) to project itself beyond Japan's borders, and describe the influence the state had on shrines and their attendees. Overseas shrines (*kaigai jinja* 海外神社) are anomalies in both lines of research, since Hansen devotes the bulk of his discussion to the religious economy as it pertains to State Shinto rites rather than to Hawaiian Shinto in

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<sup>4</sup> Michio, Nakajima, *Shinto Deities That Crossed the Sea: Japan's Overseas Shrines, 1868 to 1945*. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 37, no. 1 (2010): 21-46. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27822898>. Nakajima's article focuses on Taiwan, Korea, and China and the construction of shrines during the war period.

general. Of the roughly 1,600 overseas shrines<sup>5</sup> that stood at the end of the Pacific War, eight still stand scattered throughout the Hawaiian Islands today, five of which are on O`ahu. As Nakajima outlines in his concluding pages, these overseas shrines, particularly those in Hawai`i, deserve of further research.

In an effort to synthesize the study of Hawaiian Shinto historically while addressing Hansen's claims on Hawaiian Shinto as a topic in the study of new religions, I examine the hypothesis that Shinto, as it is practiced at Hawai`i Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu, lends itself to the characterization as a New Religious Movement. It is conceivable that KJDT be evaluated as a branch shrine of Kotohira-gū and Dazaifu Tenmangu in Japan. The *gobunrei*<sup>6</sup> from these two shrines are venerated at KJDT in Hawai`i, and there are historical ties between visiting priests and immigrants from the Kotohira-gū and Dazaifu Tenmangu's respective prefectures. When asked, the priest at KJDT and his wife defend the notion that what is practiced at their shrine is different from the practices in Japan only by way of location and population.<sup>7</sup> While the categorization of Hawaiian Shinto shrines as potential new religious groups may seem problematic, this categorization lends itself to definitions put forth by scholars of New Religious Movements and Studies. The members of the present-day O`ahu shrine are representative of a cooperative effort by their forerunners to preserve regional ties,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp.22.

<sup>6</sup> *Gobunrei* (御分霊) can be translated to mean the "honorable part or segment of a spirit," in this case referencing some essence of a kami transported from Japan to Hawai`i. KJDT translates this to mean "spirit of the deity" on their website.

<sup>7</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.



housing a mix of *kami* from multiple shrines whose doors have closed. These regional ties are manifest in the formation of the early immigrant religious circles, as well as through prefectural associations (*kenjinkai* 県人会). While the festivals, rituals, and practices bear some resemblance to the traditions from which local shrines take their inspiration, changing demographics within the community and the possible inclusion of non-traditional *kami* distinguish the shrine from being solely a branch of two Japanese shrines. Additionally, the considerable tension observed between Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu and the United States government is reflective a tension model that New Religious Movements experience within the frameworks outlined by scholars of new religions.<sup>8</sup> The possible veneration of American presidents and Hawaiian Kings, the fluctuating tensions between shrines and the United States government over time, and both the material and social organization of the shrine mark KJDT as a new religious group.

### **The Case of Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu**

#### **How do we define Hawaiian Shinto? Key Concepts and Approaches**

Today, the dynamic between local<sup>9</sup> Japanese religious groups and the American federal government is no different from any other religious group and its community in

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<sup>8</sup> Tension, in this sense, is outlined primarily by Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge in, *The Future of Religion* (1985,) and is expressed in other publications on New Religious Movements.

<sup>9</sup> In Hawai'i, the term local connotes the multiple standard-English meanings and the notion *kama`aina* simultaneously when referring to people. 'Local Japanese,' for instance, refers to someone either born in Hawai'i or one who has lived most of their life in Hawai'i and is of majority Japanese ancestry.

Hawai`i. In the years immediately following the Pacific War, shrines pursued lawsuits to reacquire wrongfully seized land, and the relations between Japanese and non-Japanese locals in Hawai`i remained strained by the wartime persecution and derogatory characterization. It appears that any and all activity relating to Shinto in Hawai`i immediately before and after the Pacific War was related to, albeit purely motivated by wartime suspicion of the United States federal government, the State Shinto ideology; many priests and ranking members of the Shinto shrine communities were interned, deported, or under constant FBI surveillance.<sup>10</sup>

Publications like Hansen's, and even more locally focused works such as Gomes' must wrestle with exactly what facet of the complex term Shinto will be discussed. Hansen avoids the temptation to compare Hawaiian Shinto to Japanese Shinto in the 1930s by asserting that the mix of influences at Hawai'i Daijingu, coupled with its alterations to the traditional pantheon and locus of the shrine, make it a new religious tradition entirely.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, Gomes's detailed and extensive history acknowledges that *Kama`aina Shinto* is something that is a product of immigration and the mix of cultural influences present in Hawai`i during the 20th century. Hardacre acknowledges in her history of Shinto in Japan, that Shinto means various things at various points in time. It is also clear that Shinto manifests itself in various ways in various places; one only needs to compare the architecture of a community-constructed shrine versus a government-constructed shrine for evidence of this. Similarly, each of the

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<sup>10</sup> See Gomes Chapter 2, 2007 UH Press.

<sup>11</sup> Hansen, 2010.

shrine communities in the Hawaiian Islands are representative of a living and changing Hawaiian Shinto that in some ways is unrecognizable when compared to Japanese Shinto today.

Probing the term Shinto is an analytical exercise that is often conducted in English language scholarship, and these definitions are useful to an extent when discussing Hawaiian Shinto. Much like an overall definition for Shinto, time and place are essential in Hawai'i's Shinto history as well. Hawaiian Shinto in 1908 might resemble something closer to a rural, pre-restoration period cultural practice imported to give comforts of home to overworked plantation laborers. Today, Hawaiian Shinto is described by those who frequent shrines as participation in rituals for what resembles Japanese ancestor worship, practiced alongside Protestant Christianity or Buddhism by people who are only remotely Japanese in ancestry.<sup>12</sup> The importance of claiming Japanese ancestry is expressed by many of the present day patrons of KJDT, and was the essential barrier of entry into the Hawaiian Shinto community in years past. Defining Hawaiian Shinto will, like defining Shinto in Japan, result in a great deal of variance dependent upon the cross section of history that is examined, and vary still more depending on what shrine(s) are included in the definition process.

A key topic of interest for this project is the theory of tension in budding religious movements innovated by Rodney Stark and William Simms Bainbridge. In addition, Hansen's claims about Hawai'i Daijingu being a New Religious Movement relate in

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<sup>12</sup> Crum, Richard. Interviews with Parents and Volunteers for *Shichigosan*. Personal interviews. Honolulu, HI. December 8th, 2017.

many ways to KJDT, in that both shrines are in Hawai'i and share some parallel traits. While the label of New Religious Movement may be regarded as problematic or as a potentially derogatory descriptor, I contend that evaluating Shinto shrines in Hawai'i using this model serves some useful functions: 1) As a test for the methodological approach of Stark and Bainbridge by employing an Asian tradition in the United States as the primary subject of study, a category entirely absent from their benchmark publication *The Future of Religion*. 2) As a test case for the tension model proposed by Stark and Bainbridge. The methodology in *The Future of Religion* is thoroughly rooted in measuring the survival of NRMs in the United States, defined based on the tension between the religious groups and their surrounding communities. Members of Shinto shrines in Hawai'i were subject to internment, the government seizure of land, and the discriminatory passage of laws by the federal government during and after the Pacific War. The communities and shrines themselves have, since then, reintegrated themselves peacefully into the Hawaiian religious landscape. KJDT offers a unique test for the tension model proposed by Stark and Bainbridge, specifically because of how targeted and effective the xenophobic measures executed by the U.S. government were.<sup>13</sup> 3) As a means of evaluating models and definitions of ethnic traditions and import movements offered by Bromley and Melton. The early Shinto communities were exclusively

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<sup>13</sup> During times of war, it is understandable that the U.S. federal government would monitor or be suspect of peoples or institutions with perceived allegiance to combatant enemy nations. The extent to which the federal government unjustly interned civilians and religious clergy alike is well documented by Kimura, Hazara & Komeiji, and by a 2007 locally produced documentary entitled *Aloha Buddha*, directed by Bill Ferehawk & Dylan Robertson.

constructed by a transplanted ethnic group, and by way of a labor diaspora, Hawaiian Shinto became a religious minority group. Reliance upon these models gives a concrete foundation from which to judge the validity of labeling KJDT as an NRM.

With these criteria in mind, this research will entertain the NRM label as it relates to KJDT as one possible means of categorizing and evaluating the shrine. As evidence and interviews with shrine officiants and patrons unfold, other analytical approaches will supplement this initial methodology as needed. To be clear, definitions, theories, and frameworks will be tested in this case study. Testing the ideas put forth in *The Future of Religion* as they relate to non-Abrahamic traditions will prove informative as to how tenable the Stark and Bainbridge theory of religion really is when applied to Hawaiian Shinto. In their work, Stark and Bainbridge applied their theories, particularly definitions of NRM specific subgroups and the general theory of religion, only to sample groups founded in the United States.<sup>14</sup> This thesis aims to use Hawaiian and Shinto history in concert with interviews to expand the scope of Stark and Bainbridge's original approach, and by addressing a tradition that they would exclude as an import tradition. While the fundamentals of the Hawaiian Shinto tradition were imported, the evolution of Hawaiian Shinto is rooted on Hawaiian soil.

It is clear that the lack of scholarship on Hawaiian Shinto exists, in part, because of the complications that Hawaiian Shinto poses. Specifically, if defining Shinto in

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<sup>14</sup> The scope of their study generally excludes imported traditions (including some European Christian groups,) or ethnic migrant communities. While there bias in Stark and Bainbridge's model on the side of Abrahamic-inspired NRMs, the models proposed by their research are fundamental to New Religious studies, and will be contextualized as they relate to KJDT.

general is so laborious and obscured by competing arguments, how then does one approach a form of Shinto that has grown and developed outside of the scope of its native environment? The changes in definition of the Meiji government and the status of being outside the scope of religion, or “supra-religious” in comparison to Buddhist or Christian groups does not apply to Shinto groups in Hawai‘i. If anything, this project alongside Gomes’s research, will elucidate that Shinto was the subject of government scrutiny *because* of religious implications, and enjoyed anything but a privileged status. In Japan, Shinto represents something native and fundamental, while in Hawai‘i, Shinto entered as foreign, developed into a potential threat, and eventually settled into the form of a peripheral tradition among the many other Japanese traditions in Hawai‘i.<sup>15</sup>

An unavoidable facet of this research is understanding what Shinto brought to local Japanese people when it arrived, and how it functioned throughout modern Hawaiian history. There is no definitive moment when something transforms from being “Japanese Shinto” to “Hawaiian Shinto” that one can point to, other than the physical arrival of priests and the erection of the shrines themselves. The location of the shrines in Hawai‘i is evidence enough of a uniquely Hawaiian brand of a tradition, only just beginning to manifest itself outside of Japan in the late 19th century. Stark and Bainbridge’s theories will be employed with special attention to tension between religious groups and the communities surrounding them. Publications produced by local Hawaiian shrines, both digital and physical, will be used in concert with live interviews

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<sup>15</sup> Japanese religions in general enter the Hawaiian Islands as minority traditions, but later represent a large portion of the religious population.

conducted with shrine priests and functionaries to describe the opinions and positions of people at KJDT. The inclusion of insider and practitioner perspective will be an important step in enriching the available resources in the study of Japanese religions in Hawai'i. This effort will borrow a page from Hansen's article in that it will focus on one specific manifestation of Shinto in Hawai'i, and take inspiration from Gomes in creating a more vivid and complete history of Kama'aina Shinto informed by practitioners.

Finally, as previously discussed, first-hand interviews will be contextualized by historical sources. These interviews were conducted with the permission of KJDT's priest Masa Takizawa, his wife Irene Takizawa, and with the expressed written and verbal consent of the patrons of KJDT. Interview subjects range from parents of children engaged in ritual, the priest and his wife, benefactors, and various volunteers.

### **Purpose, and Chapter Outline**

This project will present the history KJDT history, and discuss the applicability of the NRM label based on contemporary scholarship in New Religious Studies. In the retelling of the shrines history, three distinct periods emerge: the immigration and construction period, the war period of heightened tension, and the post-war and contemporary periods. The majority of the sources relied upon in the following pages will be academic articles, books, reviews, lectures, articles from encyclopedias or dictionaries. To supplement these, interviews conducted with members of KDJT will help to give an insider's perspective. It is intended that the voices of the patrons, priests, and benefactors

of the shrine be heard to provide context for the other academic sources, giving more first-hand clarity, and bringing the subject to life.

The organization of the chapters is as follows: Chapter 1 will entertain some fundamental research questions, review definitions and scholarship about Shinto in general as well as Hawaiian Shinto, and outline some of the methodology of the project. A large portion of this first chapter discusses Shinto in Japan and how contemporary scholars struggle to agree on some baseline definitions for Shinto or religion. This chapter also differentiates between Shrine and Sect Shinto, and carves out a place for a new category: the Hawaiian Shinto Sect.

Chapter 2 first recounts KJDT's history, beginning just before 1900 and transitioning to just before the official United States involvement in the Pacific War. This chapter focuses on the Japanese immigration to Hawai'i and the United States, the formation of the early Shinto shrines, the plight of Japanese plantation laborers, and the remarkable influence of the *kenjinkai* (prefectural associations). In order to contextualize KJDT against the backdrop of these early years, a great deal of information about other majors shrines is outlined, the bulk of which derives from the work of UH Manoa Religion scholar Paul Gomes III.

Chapter 3 chapter begins with the infamous bombing of Pearl Harbor and the impact that the Pacific War had on Hawai'i and the local Japanese and Japanese-American population. A major feature of this period is the increased level of palpable sociopolitical tension between the Japanese living in Hawai'i and the territorial and United States federal government. The war period nearly brought an end to Hawaiian



Shinto, and many shrines closed their doors as a result of illegal repossession of land, internment, or simply out of fear. Chapter three continues beyond the end of the war, and includes the tumultuous post-war years, and ends recounting a long-form interview with the present-day priest of KJDT.

Chapter 4 reviews some models and definitions proposed by Rodney Stark and William Simms Bainbridge, as well as G. Jordan Melton and David G. Bromley regarding New Religious Studies. It is from these studies that the models of tension, definitions of ethnic or imported movements, and general frameworks for the study of NRMs are drawn. A handful of ideas from these scholars are carefully selected for this study based on their applicability to KJDT, and some arguments and counter arguments are entertained within the context of KJDTs history.

Finally, a brief conclusion reflects on the value and arc of research in New Religious Movements, and describes a personal connection to KJDT. Admittedly, I had a personal relationship with some members of KJDT before conducting this research, and these experiences in part inspired my study of the shrine. Also, there are a number of avenues of potential study that could not be addressed within this research project, but are of interest for the continued study of Japanese religions, New Religions, Shinto, and how Shinto communities have formed outside Japan.

## CHAPTER 1

### What is Shinto? Definitions and Literature Review

Aside from the lack of scholarship on Hawaiian Shinto, this area of study is further complicated by defining what exactly one means when using the term “Shinto.” Often, academic studies of Shinto divide the tradition between State<sup>16</sup> and Sect Shinto.<sup>17</sup> The purpose of separating the two is to emphasize the conditions that led to the nationalistic shift that took place during the Meiji Restoration and contrast the spirit of this national religious institution with that of an ancient animist-inspired ancestor worship practiced throughout the islands of Japan. A great deal of English-language scholarship on Shinto arose during the Pacific War, and the Allied Powers’ desire to understand the culture of Japan, and ultimately to remove the nationalist spirit of Shinto from the Japanese constitution.<sup>18</sup> The imperial government took a keen interest in promoting

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<sup>16</sup> Hardacre, Hansen, and Nakajima refer to State Shinto whenever discussing the prewar, wartime, and postwar agenda of the ultranationalist ideology in Japan during the Pacific War. Kasulis, preferring “spiritual” and “military” Shinto, makes essentially the same bifurcation in his general description of the traditions dual natured representation.

<sup>17</sup> Sect Shinto, in some cases, refers to Shinto practice and institutions not directly affiliated with ideas like the *kokka kannen* 国家観念(national concepts), and the promotion of a unified state-sponsored religion. Maxey notes that Shrine Shinto, according to the Meiji Department of Divinities in 1882 and the Assembly of the Three Religions in 1912, at one point referred to State sponsored Shinto institutions (Ise, Yasukuni, etc.) In this period and in many references used in Maxey and others, Sect Shinto specifically denotes new religious groups such as Oyashiro-kyo and even Tenri-kyo whose members were politically coerced into supporting the agenda of Shintoists lobbying for superior religious status under the law (pp.145-147, 240-241).

<sup>18</sup> The most famous instance of occupying forces removing the nationalistic spirit of Shinto from Japan is no doubt Emperor Hirohito’s renouncement of his divinity in 1946. This symbolic gesture by the Emperor was coupled with constitutional reform, and the abolition of the Imperial Rescript on Education. See Hardacre Chapter 14.

Shinto as a national tradition, and invested heavily into promoting a unified ideology in national doctrine and in the minds of Japanese citizens.<sup>19</sup> Concepts from the *kokutai* 國體 (literally “nation-body,” often “national polity”) were propagated by the reformed government to promote adoration, allegiance, and appreciation among civilians for the emperor and the imperial government.<sup>20</sup> Shinto as a tradition was central to this rebranding of the national image, and the traditional aspects of Shinto along with the imperial family’s supposed genealogical ties to Amaterasu in many served to justify the imperial power for the general public.<sup>21</sup> Shrines were transformed by an influx of imperial funding and edicts that emphasized the *kokutai* ideals, and were categorized as State Shinto. One fruitful result of building a new national identity came in the form of successful international military efforts and the acquisition of territories and colonies.

The less politically connected shrines and Shinto-influenced sects that maintained operations as local places of cultural worship and practice were referred to as Shrine and Sect Shinto.<sup>22</sup> The Meiji government referred to Shrine Shinto 神社神道 (*Jinja Shinto*) as a separate category under the Bureau of Shinto Affairs. This was both for the practical purposes of separating financial contributions from the government to the institutions into neat categories, and to attach the government’s message to the shrines that would receive the funding and, in turn, promote the national teachings. Control over certain rituals and

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<sup>19</sup> See Hardacre 2017, Maxey 2014, Gomes 2007, etc.

<sup>20</sup>Helen Hardacre. *Shinto: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 358-360.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

holidays were officially bestowed upon the priests and ranking functionaries of the Bureau, and this programmatic organization of civilian religious life was fundamental to unifying and organizing the reformation period.<sup>23</sup> In English academic writing about Shinto, the category of “State Shinto” is often used to denote this late nineteenth-century installation that was referred to as “Shrine Shinto.” Helen Hardacre is responsible for some of the confusion as a result of her book, *Shinto and the State, 1868–1988*, and she acknowledges and addresses the triad of terms in her 2017 book *Shinto: A History*. Scholars are often guilty of subscribing to the definitions and terms set forth by the imperial government or catalogued in official records. The experiences of people who participated in both State and Sect Shinto rituals or practices are difficult to articulate relying upon records and data alone. A prime example of this is that Masa Takizawa, the priest of Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu on O`ahu, who was trained at Kōgakkan University, divides Shinto into State and Shrine categories.<sup>24</sup> While this may be Rev. Takizawa’s attempt at simplifying the political history of his tradition, it shows that there is a clear gap between historic Japanese distinctions between shrine and sect Shinto, and modern English descriptions of state, shrine, and sect forms of the tradition.

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<sup>23</sup> See Maxey, Chapter 4. Funeral rites were an issue of particular note; Shinto priests and functionaries would have traditional Shinto funerals, while almost all other funeral practices were officially marked in the realm of Buddhism. This government decision gives rise to the English-speaking Japanese academic adage, “Born Shinto, die Buddhist,” which is attributed to Ian Reader by way of his *Religion in Contemporary Japan*.

<sup>24</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.

It is also possible that Rev. Takizawa misremembered the names of these categories, but the conversation was contextualized from my own divulging of the opinions of Hardacre, Maxey, and Hansen.

In effect, there exists a trifurcation of definition, delineated in an opaque and convoluted way, which is addressed by a multitude of scholars represented in this review. For the purposes of this this, ‘State Shinto’ will be explicitly noted when describing the historical imperial ties between the Japanese government and the tradition. “Sect Shinto” will be used in reference to traditions like Oyashiro-kyo and Tenri-kyo delineated by scholars like Maxey as being affiliated with but not directly under the jurisdiction of “State Shinto.” Sect Shinto will also include shrines not funded by the government that are not necessarily Shinto-influenced religious traditions, particularly the Konpira Shrine and Dazaifu Tenmangu , from which KJDT got its name. Lastly, “Shrine Shinto” must have a more fluid, era-dependent definition that is more related to state-oriented views in the past, and in more modern parlance is used to describe the rituals and practices at any given shrine.

More than differentiating between state and sect, scholars often posit Shinto as having other characteristics that in some way justify a lack of putative definition. Hardacre, for example, differentiates between a public and private notion of Shinto as a religion, while Breen and Teeuwen describe Shinto as an ideological construct that is more political than religious.<sup>25</sup> In some analyses, Shinto is treated as an undoubtedly religious tradition that, like all religious traditions, grows and changes with time as a result of internal needs and external forces. Other scholars like Breen and Teeuwen as well as Zhong propose that not only is Shinto not a religion, but it is a tool used to

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<sup>25</sup> John Breen, Mark Teeuwen. *A New History of Shinto*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 280 pp.

legitimize centers of political control throughout Japanese history. Moreover, there is no firm consensus on when Shinto comes into being, with some scholars stating that Shinto does not formally exist until the 15th century.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, Hardacre acknowledges continuity between the *kami* worship of the past and the practices of later periods, which appears to be in part a compensation for the rigid focus that she and other scholars placed on State Shinto above all other iterations. This lack of a consensus in defining Shinto is demonstrated by this major divide among scholars; scholars such as Hardacre, Kasulis, and Ono maintain the stance that Shinto exists from Japanese prehistory until the modern day in some form or another. On the other hand, Breen and Teeuwen, Zhong, and Maxey<sup>27</sup> offer that the fundamental concepts and the word Shinto itself are manufactured either for the institutionalization of certain political aspirations, or in response to threatening foreign ideologies.<sup>28</sup> One can be sure that these differences are in large part due to a more fundamental disagreement over a mutual definition of religion. Rather than

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<sup>26</sup> Jolyon B. Thomas. Review of multiple authors H-Japan, H-Net Reviews. November, 2017. Thomas notes that in review of Kuroda's thesis argument, Breen and Teeuwen explain that the term Shinto did not exist until the 15th century, and that Shinto ideas are a 'transhistorical phenomena that form(s) the core of Japanese culture.' Kami worship predates this, but Kuroda's argument is referenced in Breen & Teeuwen, Zhong, etc.

<sup>27</sup> The crux of Maxey's argument is found in his title, "The Greatest Problem." Maxey describes the development of the word *shūkyō* as a neologism to explain religion as an abstract concept, and that Shinto is both legally and practically made separate from Buddhism and Christianity. This great problem, meaning religion, is solved by the Meiji government formalizing and codifying the loci of traditions in different tiers, placing Shinto above the rest.

<sup>28</sup> See Maxey (chapter 5,) and Zhong, Yijiang. *The Origin of Modern Shinto in Japan: The Vanquished Gods of Izumo*. Bloomsbury Shinto Studies Series. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. 272 pp. Zhong argues in part that the development of the *kokugaku* (National Learning) was motivated by concerns about Catholicism spreading within Japan's borders.

pose a definition or theory of religion, for the purposes of this thesis Shinto will be treated as a religion. Similarly, the history of Hawaiian Shinto will similarly be treated as the history of a multi-institutional religious history, with KJDT as the centerpiece.

Japanese nationals who associate with Shinto shrines and customs today, like the aforementioned cross-section of academics, find a reliable definition similarly evasive. Kasulis notes that, "...most Japanese seldom reflect on Shinto as a 'religion' in which they consciously participate. For them, being Shinto is neither a set of beliefs formalized into a creed nor an identifiable act of faith. Its festivals and annual celebrations are things Japanese do because its traditional..."<sup>29</sup> This piece of social anthropology offered by Kasulis would lend strength to the argument that Shinto is not necessarily religious. Again, the issue is about defining religion. Without attempting to define religion in general, it must be stated that religion includes beliefs. However, beliefs are not the entire picture, and religion is also equal parts rituals, practices, and the people who participate in them.

A large focus of this thesis is to support the idea that KJDT is in many ways a New Religious Movement. In order to prove this, the history of KDJT is explored and segmented into time periods with labels that suit NRM frameworks. It is up to the reader to decide whether these alternative historical markers of Japanese immigration to Hawai'i are adequate. As will be explored in chapters two and three, there exists supporting

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<sup>29</sup> Kasulis, Thomas P. *Shinto: The Way Home*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004, pg 2.

evidence for evaluating the history of the Japanese in Hawai'i through criteria pertaining to importation and sociopolitical tension.



## CHAPTER 2

### Formation and Construction of Hawaiian Shinto Communities

#### Isei, Nisei, and Kenjinkai: The Formation of a Japanese Society in Hawai'i

The *Gannenmono* 元年者, Isei 一世, and Nisei 二世 Japanese immigrants laid the foundational stories for the cultivation of the Hawaiian Japanese community. In the book *Okage Sama De: The Japanese in Hawai'i* co-authored by Dorothy Hazama and Jane Komeiji, the story of immigration spanning from 1885 to 1985 is depicted largely through interviews and archival research. The authors take a great deal of care in incorporating personal stories from interviews or newspapers describing the characters and themes in the evolution of Japanese social life in the islands. Controversial issues of race and segregation, the tumultuous period before and after Pacific War, and the occasional statistical analysis is borrowed from a wealth of UH Press publications and national and state census data. Of particular interest for the study of Shinto in Hawai'i is the parallel motivations behind the formation of Buddhist and Shinto circles, as well as the early immigrant propensity to identify with the regional origins of their ancestors.

As is widely documented by Hazama and Komeiji (and others), one of the original purposes of Japanese immigration to the Hawaiian Islands was to fulfill contractual labor obligations (mostly on sugar plantations). This migration was due to the dire economic straits that many Japanese laborers found themselves in, particularly in prefectures such as Yamaguchi and Hiroshima<sup>30</sup>. Eugene Van Reed, under the direction

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<sup>30</sup>Kimura, Yukiko. *Isei: Japanese Immigrants in Hawai'i*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992, pg. 20-21.

of an advisor to King Kamehameha the V, recruited 350 Japanese workers during the transition between the end of the Edo Shogunate and the dawn of the Meiji Restoration.<sup>31</sup> Due to issues with obtaining passports from the new government following the overthrow of the Edo shogunate, and the turbulence of the regime change, Van Reed eventually shipped out only 153 of the *gannenmono* destined for Hawai'i in May of 1868.<sup>32</sup> These workers would be the first Japanese cane-field laborers to undergo hardships in the way of poor working conditions, mistreatment by *lunas*,<sup>33</sup> or field bosses, and dealing with major linguistic and cultural hurdles abroad. By the end of the three-year contract in 1871, around sixty of the first immigrants elected to return to Japan, both to avoid further abuses, and to seek more lucrative opportunities back home.<sup>34</sup> The documentation for exactly how many immigrants varies slightly, with estimates ranging from just under sixty to seventy in total, forty of whom left Hawai'i as early as 1870. Anticipating a boom in the sugar industry, King David Kalakaua along with John Makini Kapena began negotiating the foundations of an eventual labor agreement with Japan in 1881. This

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<sup>31</sup> Hazama, Dorothy, and Jane Okamoto Komeiji. 1986. *Okage Sama De: the Japanese in Hawai'i, 1885-1985*. Honolulu, HI: Bess Press, p. 3-7.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Kimura and Hazama & Komeiji note abuse of laborers at various points in the early period of Japanese migration. In particular, Kimura describes men being forced to work while sick resulting in their death, and deserting laborers being rounded up and savagely beaten for attempting to skirt their contracts.

<sup>34</sup> Many of the laborers also complained about the terms of their contract in regard to wages and savings requirements. The Japanese government initially mandated the workers to save up to 25% of their earnings (later reduced to 15%), which would prove trying when the laborers had to essentially create their own living infrastructure from the ground up.

subsequent wave of immigrant laborers, the *Isei*, departed from Japan in January of 1885, totaling 945 laborers from nine prefectures.<sup>35</sup> These first groups of migrant workers were mostly male,<sup>36</sup> but later groups included more women. As was common in the early 1900s, many of the male laborers arranged marriages with picture brides from Japan. For a short period, incoming female migrants were forced to marry upon arrival by Christian ministers.<sup>37</sup> By 1917, mandatory marriage and Christian-sanctioned marriage were both done away with, and incoming Japanese female immigrants could marry freely at a religious institution of their choosing.<sup>38</sup>

Some data from this period, provided by archival work done by Takakazu Maeda, shows one of the key roles that early Hawaiian Shinto served within the Japanese migrant population. In the calendar year 1913, 495 out of 1,252 marriages documented were overseen by Shinto priests of the Izumo Taisha Mission.<sup>39</sup> These unions fueled the generations to follow, and Shinto maintained a strong association in the budding Japanese community, with its performance of traditional Shinto-style marriage rituals. While Shingon and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhist priests conducted larger percentages of the marriage

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<sup>35</sup> Kimura, Yukiko. *Isei: Japanese immigrants in Hawaii*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992, p.3-7.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Gomes, pg.24. This forced marriage policy often lead to confusion, resulting in family members being married to one another. This was one of the primary reasons for abolition of the mandate.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Maeda, Takakazu. *Hawaii no Jinjashi (The Historiography of Shinto Shrine in Hawaii)*. Taimeido. Tokyo, Japan. 1999. pg. 16-17.

rituals through the 1930s, 165 out of the 483 registered marriages were conducted by the same Hawai`i Izumo Taishakyo Mission shrine between the summer of 1933 and 1934 <sup>40</sup>. The choice of the Shinto ceremony rather than Christian or Buddhist rituals for marriage was reflective of the immigrant desire to identify and connect with the prefectures of the wedded.<sup>41</sup> This notion is supported by the migration of *ujigami*<sup>42</sup> (village tutelary deities) from a variety of prefectures to Hawai`i, which drew former residents of these prefectures to have their marriage blessed by the presence of a familiar *kami* Shinto weddings were generally more common in Japan, and the idea of a “traditional” Shinto wedding was being propagated in Japan in the Meiji period. As more shrines acquired priests in Hawai`i, the statistics for Shinto weddings correlatively increased. The shrine with the most recorded *ujigami* in the 1930s, Hawai`i Kotohira Jinja, is one of the shrines that eventually merged with the Dazaifu Tenmangu to become the modern-day Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu.<sup>43</sup> The marriage records for Hawai`i Kotohira are not recorded explicitly in Maeda's or Gomes's records in this period, but the concentration of regional deities is one of the many reasons why the KJDT shrine holds unique status in the story of Hawaiian shrines. There were three main types of enshrined deities in the shrines in Hawaii, as outlined by Maeda: Tutelary deities attached to an Isei's particular hometown

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<sup>40</sup> Gomes, pg. 25.

<sup>41</sup> Buddhist weddings were, in this period, more common in Hawai`i because of the larger Buddhist priest population among the early immigrants.

<sup>42</sup> *Ujigami* (氏神) refers to a patron god, guardian deity, or local deity of a particular place in Shinto. It can also be translated as “parishioner.”

<sup>43</sup> Maeda, pg.25, [www.e-shrine.org/history.html](http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html).

(e.g., Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, etc.), deities to confer prosperity on a business and/or occupation (Inari, Itsukushima, and Konpira), and the general deities such as the Sun Goddess (Amaterasu Ōmikami.)

At one point, the Hawaiian Islands housed over 59 distinct shrines, with many smaller ones for which there is likely no accounting.<sup>44</sup> Shrines were constructed by immigrants with no background as religious clerics, wishing only to reconnect with the cultural essence of Japan in their newfound homeland. Maeda emphasizes the spontaneous group construction of these shrines as unaffiliated with the motivations of State Shinto, and many early shrines would only have ordained priests after construction. This pattern is not entirely unique to Hawai`i; many village shrines in Japan were either constructed by laypeople, or were completely unaffiliated with the Meiji government reforms. The geography and number of Hawaiian shrines was unique however, and the issues that Hawaiian Shinto faced during the rise and fall of the Meiji Empire were quite different from other overseas shrines. The sphere of influence of State Shinto between the 1890s and 1930s included colonial shrines in Taiwan and Sakhalin, and occupied territory shrines in China and Manchukuo. Shrines in Hawai`i and the Americas were representative of the aforementioned overseas shrines unaffiliated with the State Shinto project, as noted by Nakajima. Of these four major categories, shrines located in Hawai`i and the Americas have no records of funding from the Japanese government.<sup>45</sup> These records show that the financial obligations for Hawaiian shrines, in contrast to other

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Nakajima, pg. 21-46.

overseas shrines, were only for the maintenance of their buildings, and that Hawai`i shrines were not beholden to the imperial ideological agenda.<sup>46</sup> This distinction puts the communities in Hawai`i in a completely unique space during this forty-year window: Hawaiian Shinto is not separate from the legacy of Shinto leading up to the 1890s and early 1900s, but what Shinto means and how shrines interacted with their attendees is not comparable to the hyper nationalist overtones of Shinto during, and just after the Meiji period in Japan. The differences found here in terms of funding and the original construction of Hawaiian shrines only grew in the years following the Pacific War. Shrines that sprung from the hands of the migrant laborers were often led either by visiting migrant priests or by laypeople, who were themselves plantation workers.

### **The Importance of *Kenjinkai***

*Kenjinkai*,<sup>47</sup> as described by Hazara and Komeiji, as well as Kimura, were essentially social clubs providing immigrant families with a self-maintained institution for organizing communal activities, such as fundraising, cultural education, and reflection. Recruiters for the labor contract program in Hawai`i specifically targeted poor or overpopulated prefectures,<sup>48</sup> and the individuals from each prefecture brought with

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<sup>46</sup> Izumo Taishakyo Mission of Hawai`i and Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu are listed as branch shrines of the original locations in Japan. However, according to Gomes archival research as well as interviews with the head priest of KJDT, the shrines financial ties to their Japan based counter-parts begin after the Pacific War. Priests would be appointed to Hawai`i shrines or requested by people in Hawai`i, but the shrines were built and funded primarily by Hawai`i residents.

<sup>47</sup> Meaning prefectural associations.

<sup>48</sup> Kimura, p.22.

them differing accents and cultural trademarks. From prefecture to prefecture, their dialects, festivals, and emphases on traditions and customs varied. As a result of this variance, the different *ujigami* housed at Hawaiian shrines attracted patrons from their respective prefectures of origin. This patronage of the regional *kami* in turn encouraged and bolstered the social connectivity of peoples from the same prefectures, and the growth opportunities for both *kenjinkai* and shrines complemented one another.

Yamaguchi-ken<sup>49</sup> and Hiroshima-ken represented an overwhelming 50% of the total Japanese population of Hawai`i by 1924, with Fukuoka, Okinawa, Kumamoto, and a mix of other prefectures comprising the other half of the Japanese immigrant population.<sup>50</sup> The founding members of the early *kenjinkai*, and the aims of these prefectural groups were similar in nature to those of early Japanese religious groups in Hawai`i. The purpose of *kenjinkai*, according to Kimura was, "...for mutual aid in times of illness or death, as well as for various kinds of misfortune...and fellowship" (pg.25). Coping with a complete lack of supportive infrastructure in case of personal strife, early *kenjinkai* formed out of an immediate need to aid a particular family or person. In one example, Kimura describes the purpose behind the formation of the Niigata *kenjinkai* to raise money for a suit of clothes for a man who was convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Once formed, the *kenjinkai* gathered again to throw a party for some Japanese naval officers during their short stay on O`ahu in 1909.<sup>51</sup> Hazama and Komeiji, as well as

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<sup>49</sup> *Ken* denotes prefecture.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Kimura, pg.26-27.

Kimura, offer numerous examples akin to the Niigata *kenjinkai* formation story: a death or misfortune befalls someone from Hiroshima or Yamaguchi, and word spreads throughout the community. In response, the former citizens of the prefecture banded together to raise money for a funeral or to help rebuild damaged property. After formally organizing, the various *kenjinkai* maintained contact and organized somewhat regular meetings for concerned parties or otherwise addressed the needs of people in crisis.

Beginning as small assemblies of people trying to aid the sick or needy, various Hawai'i *kenjinkai* maintain themselves to this date, the most prominent being the Honolulu Fukushima Kenjinkai, the Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjinkai, Fukuoka Kenjinkai-O'ahu, and the Hawai'i United Okinawa Association. These four groups sponsor Japanese cultural studies events, and continue the tradition of raising funds for those in need. For example, the Honolulu Fukushima Kenjin-Kai holds annual memorial services for the catastrophic magnitude 9.0 Tohoku earthquake of 2011, and sent sums of money along with plumeria trees to plant.<sup>52</sup> The four major *kenjinkai* are representative of the immigrant population distributions from a century ago, and each maintains an organizing platform online through its website, its Facebook page, or both. Apart from the temporary cease of operations of many *kenjinkai* in the years during the Pacific War,<sup>53</sup> these groups have maintained continuous operations and similar community-service motivations over the last 100 years.

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<sup>52</sup><https://www.facebook.com/HonoluluFukushimaKenjinkai/>

<sup>53</sup> Kimura, pg. 47-48.



*Kenjinkai*, by definition, consist of people from specific places. In the early years of the Japanese in Hawai`i, so too were shrines and the *ujigami* linked specifically to the prefectures from which they originated. As previously mentioned, *kenjinkai* provided services akin to those that religious institutions provided, namely, community building, cultural preservation, and lending aid to the sick or downtrodden. While the type of support they provide is similar, the sphere of specialty that *kenjinkai* and shrines occupy diverge. On the one hand, *kenjinkai* are strictly secular, concerning themselves with humanitarian and political efforts, without any religious overtones. While it may be true that *kenjinkai* elicit services from a priest or a monk for funeral rites, the organizations are themselves religious. Between the 1890s and 1920s, many shrines and temples were still under construction, and the Japanese community of Hawai`i was still laying the groundwork for its religious infrastructure. The prefectural associations served a multifunctional role while the immigrant community established religious institutions, banks, and other more formalized organizations.

In the *Aloha Buddha* documentary film, as well as in Kimura,<sup>54</sup> it is clear that the Japanese of Hawai`i belonged to either Shinto, Buddhist, and/or to Christian institutions while maintaining *kenjinkai* membership. It was not uncommon for people to maintain some degree of membership in two religious circles, as is still common both in Hawai`i and Japan today.<sup>55</sup> Early Japanese religious institutions and *kenjinkai* developed simultaneously, and the mutual influence and overlapping membership of the two is not

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<sup>54</sup> See chapters 2 and 10.

<sup>55</sup> See Kasulis Chapter 1, Gomes Chapter 3.

to be confused with congruence of purpose and practice. Many members of *kenjinkai* were also patrons of shrines, and the goals set forth by *kenjinkai* sometimes manifested themselves in the form of changes or alterations to shrines. For example, *kenjinkai* were responsible in some cases for adding a *bunrei* 分霊 (main shrine deity) to a given shrine, hiring a priest for a shrine, or the implementation of a festival or cultural event at a shrine. By the same token, shrines often used the connectivity of *kenjinkai* to promote events, as well as to fundraise. Moving forward, the origin stories of the major shrines on O'ahu are inextricably tied to the influence of, and support from the various *kenjinkai*.

### **Origins of Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu and Other Major Hawaiian Shrines**

The story of Rev. Hitoshi Hirota of Hawai'i Kotohira Jinja in 1920 illustrates how the early Hawaiian Shinto community made the most of its resources. Before assisting in the construction and groundbreaking for the Kotohira Jinja, Rev. Hirota was a priest for Hawai'i Izumo Taisha Mission.<sup>56</sup> Rev. Hirota retired from his duties at Izumo Taisha in 1919, but was later encouraged by locals to open a shrine for Kotohira-gū, and did so despite severe illness. In 1920, Rev. Hirota blessed a converted home-shrine<sup>57</sup> at 1256-A North King Street in Kapalama, and performed rites invoking the *ujigami*. The community along with the *ujigami* soon relocated, purchasing property and constructing a

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>

<sup>57</sup> Due to limitations of funds for purchasing property, converted residential Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples are very common in Hawai'i during this period. Some of the most famous converted residence edifices were Buddhist house-temples constructed in part by Imamura Emyo, a major influential figure in the history of Hawaiian Buddhism, and the members of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i.

shrine on the corner of Wolter Lane and North King Street between 1919 and 1920.

Shortly after the shrine received official recognition in 1924 as a branch shrine of the Kagawa-ken forerunner, Rev. Hirota passed away at age forty-two, after years of battling illness.<sup>58</sup>

The formation story of the Kotohira shrine is part and parcel of the broader tale of Hawaiian Shinto in a few distinct ways. First, Rev. Hirota hailed from Hiroshima-ken, where an overwhelming percentage of Japanese immigrants to Hawai'i came from. The entire purpose of Rev. Hirota's immigration, according to the KJDT website as well as Gomes's and Kinjo's thesis research, was to become the *gūji* (head priest), albeit temporarily, of Hawai'i Izumo Taishakyo Mission. The Izumo Taishakyo shrine in Japan, located more than sixty miles north of the heart of Hiroshima, is one of the thirteen formally recognized sects of Shinto<sup>59</sup> that were explicitly outside the jurisdiction of the State Shinto project.<sup>60</sup> Hawai'i Izumo Taishakyo is the only standing shrine in Hawai'i that has a direct relationship with a shrine in Japan,<sup>61</sup> which places it in a very unique position in the Hawaiian Shinto landscape. Other shrines such as Hawai'i Daijingū were

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>

<sup>59</sup> See Hardacre pg. 384. The Izumo Taishakyo sect in Japan was founded between 1878 and 1882, and was famous for pilgrim masters called *oshi*, who organized pilgrimages from surrounding communities to visit the shrine in Izumo. Further, the founder Senge Takatomi promoted the concept that Ōkuninushi-no-Okami was an underworld deity, and enshrined souls of deceased patrons.

<sup>60</sup> Kinjo, Sawako. *The Japanese and Okinawan American Communities and Shintoism in Hawaii: Through the Case of Izumo Taishakyo Mission of Hawaii*. Masters Thesis in American Studies, May 2012, pg. 20.

<sup>61</sup> Gomes, pg.22.

founded entirely by laypeople. Conversely, thanks to Rev. Hirota, the original Kotohira Jinja was a cooperative effort involving both laypeople and a trained priest. This foundation-story characteristic of the Kotohira shrine was the first major feature of Hawaiian Shinto: the traditionally ordained Rev. Hirota and the major Izumo tradition, and something new, in the form of Hawaiian-Japanese immigrants constructing a new shrine in a land outside Japan.

The second important factor was that the multiple Kotohira shrines on O'ahu housed a myriad of *kami*, and the mixture of deities only increased as the years passed. In addition to the Wolter Lane location opened in 1920, a second Kotohira shrine on Kolua Street in Kaka'ako functioned as both a religious edifice and a Japanese language school.<sup>62</sup> There is little historical information about the Kaka'ako Kotohira shrine,<sup>63</sup> but it is clear that both the Wolter Lane and Kolua Street Kotohira shrines housed a great many *bunrei*. Gomes, Maeda, and the KJDT published history all confirm that the Kotohira shrines house the most *kami*, listing over 30 on the KJDT website last updated in 2018. This trait is unique when compared to other major shrines still in existence today, such as the Izumo Taishakyo Mission of Hawai'i or the Hawai'i Daijingū Temple. The Taishakyo sect is in a unique position regarding its ideological and ritual focus on *Ōkuninushi-no-Ōkami*. While Gomes notes that *Amaterasu-ōmikami* and Emperor Meiji were enshrined at the Maui and Kona Izumo Taishakyo, the O'ahu Izumo Taishakyo Mission lists *Hawaii*

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>

<sup>63</sup> The Kaka'ako shrine chose to dissolve itself in 1944 as a result of wartime pressure, and the head priest was apparently the brother of Reverend Misao of Nawiliwili Daijingū on Kauai. Other than these tidbits, most of the history and *kami* from this shrine were absorbed by KJDT.

*Ubusuna-no-Kami*<sup>64</sup> and *Ōkuninushi-no-Ōkami* as the two primary deities. The inclusion of *Hawaii Ubusuna-no-Kami* is representative of the emphasis that the Shinto tradition puts on the natural surroundings of a shrine. Because so much Shinto ritual is focused on the agricultural practices and concerns that were prevalent in Japanese antiquity, it stands to reason that respect for the deities of a geographic region are of chief importance. In the cases of shrines outside of Japan, branch shrines that maintain strong and consistent ties to Japanese shrines, such as Izumo Taishakyo Mission of Hawai`i or Tsubaki Grand Shrine of America<sup>65</sup> respectfully enshrine the local *Ubusuna-no-Kami*. For the Izumo Shrine in Hawai`i and the Tsubaki shrine in Washington, the number of *kami* included is limited to just two or three.

Wilburn Hansen's article about Hawai`i Daijingū Temple was one of the inspirations for my thesis research, in part because of the atypical pantheon of *kami* that Hansen highlights. In addition to *Amaterasu-ōmikami*, *Hachiman*, and *Hawaii Ubusuna-no-Kami*, Hawai`i Daijingū Temple includes what are essentially Hawaiian and American Hero deities. The shrine includes George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, King Kamehameha, King David Kalakaua, and a number of unmentioned Hawaiian and American service people in its pantheon.<sup>66</sup> This cast of characters considered as *kami* is

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<sup>64</sup> Meaning the protective spirit or deity of the region of Hawai`i. In Japan, *ubusuna-no-kami* generally refers to either an *ujigami* or a deity that exists in a specific geography by an already present group of worshipers. In new Shinto localities, this term can include old deities, or simply pay heed to the spirit of the land.

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.tsubakishrine.org/history/index.html>. *America-kokudokunimitama-No-O-Kami*, protector of North American continent is enshrined at Tsubaki in Washington State.

<sup>66</sup> <https://daijingutemple.org/about/>.

quite remarkable, and is evidence of internal and external transformation occurring in the case of Hawaiian Shinto: the *kami* that are venerated within the shrine change to suit the new patrons, and the location of the tradition molds itself to fit its new surroundings. There is precedent for the veneration of great politicians or leaders in Shinto history. For example, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and Toyotomi Hideyoshi had shrines dedicated to them, and are venerated as heroes. The only noteworthy example of a non-Japanese hero deity in Japan would be Thomas Edison being granted a monument and an annual *matsuri* at *Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū* in Kyoto.<sup>67</sup> Due to the abnormality of including so many foreign *kami* in a shrines assemblage, Hawai`i Daijingū inspired Wilburn Hansen to consider the shrine as a New Religious Movement, and Hansen's approach in turn inspired my investigation of KJDT. Hansen's study focused primarily on the 1930s and 1940s, a period of extreme tension and controversy for Shinto in Hawai`i. Veneration of people like Washington and Kalakaua take the notion of respecting the land on which a shrine is built to an unprecedented level, with no other comparable phenomenon documented at an overseas shrine in the academic study of Shinto in English. Hansen's article and arguments must be investigated further, particularly in regard to his claims about NRMs. The uniqueness of Hawaii Daijingū is noteworthy in the story of Hawaiian Shinto, and will be of use in further articulating the claim that KJDT may be an NRM.

Returning to the formation of KJDT and its many *kami*, the shrine finds itself somewhere in between the highly connected branch status of Izumo Taishakyo Mission of Hawai`i and the highly acculturated or transformed status of Hawai`i Daijingū. Gomes

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<sup>67</sup><https://www.japanvisitor.com/japan-temples-shrines/iwashimizu-hachiman-gu-shrine>

notes in discussing the many *ujigami* brought to the two Kotohira shrines that, “Not surprisingly, the origin of these *ujigami* reflects the three largest prefectural groups in Hawaii.”<sup>68</sup> Japanese immigration continued through the 1920s and 30s, although the volume of immigrants was greatly reduced due to the Exclusion Act of 1924. The Exclusion Act targeted immigrants of Asian descent moving to the mainland United States, as some United States citizens expressed that too much of the workforce were Asian immigrants.<sup>69</sup> Family members of immigrants were permitted to enter the country, however, and families in Hawai`i took advantage of this. Priests continued to bring the essences of deities to be venerated at the request of both priests and civilians alike. These priests were able to come to Hawai`i during the period of the Exclusion Act, either because they were related to someone living in Hawai`i or because they came to Hawai`i during earlier periods of time. In some cases, there were no shrines for a specific location or for a specific deity, so the various *kami* were incorporated into already existing shrines. Kaka`ako was home to a great many Japanese immigrants, many of whom sought work as fishermen when their plantation contracts expired.<sup>70</sup> *Ebisu* was enshrined to address the needs of fishermen and sailors living in Kaka`ako, while the Kalihi Kotohira shrine included *Ōhmono-nushi-no-kami* and *Sugawara no Michizane*<sup>71</sup> to appease the

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<sup>68</sup> Gomes, pg.26.

<sup>69</sup> Discussion posted by ThinkTech Hawai`i, *Japanese in Hawaii with John Hokutani and Derrick Iwata* Sept. 3, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3yIjPcklgU>.

<sup>70</sup> Gomes, pg.40.

<sup>71</sup> The initial inclusion of this *kami* was not in connection with Dazaifu Tenmangu , but from Shirasaki Hachimangū. Dazaifu Tenmangu ’s *gobunrei* and name are attached to the Kalihi Kotohira shrine after the Pacific War.

populations who immigrated from districts adjacent to the two *kami*'s major shrines.<sup>72</sup>

Due to the geographically and vocationally auspicious nature of the gods at the Kotohira shrines, KJDT and its past iterations are and were very popular, as noted by Maeda and Gomes. This popularity from the 1920s and 1930s was based on a familiarity with the regional *kami*, as well as the shared work experience of local fishermen and their families who frequented the shrine.

There is enough information here to describe the foundational and original organizations of the Kotohira shrines on O`ahu, but much is left to be addressed about the years immediately preceding and following the Pacific War. During this time period, the Kotohira shrines, along with virtually all shrines in the Hawaiian Islands, fell under heavy scrutiny from the U.S. federal government. Moreover, the social tension between virtually anyone of Japanese ancestry and other populations in Hawai`i shifted during this period. By the mid 1930s, the Japanese population of Hawai`i was nearly 40% of the total population, putting Hawai`i in a unique position with regard to the internment of Japanese people during the Pacific War. These years are formative, and reformative in the history of KJDT. For now, this background of the Isei and Nisei and the founding of the shrines will be sufficient. Moving forward, the social and political climate as it relates to the war period of KJDT and its many players will be examined in closer detail.

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<sup>72</sup> Kotohira-gū is southeast of Hiroshima, and close enough that the massive Hiroshima immigrant population would either be aware or actively venerate *Ohmono-nushi-no-kami*. Shirasaki Hachimangū is in Yamaguchi-ken. The people of Yamaguchi would similarly be familiar with *Michizane Sugawara*, and the later addition of Dazaifu Tenmangu to the shrine's name further emphasizes the significance of this *kami*.



### **Tensions Mounting and Growth in the Religious Economy**

In the years leading up to the United States declaring war on Japan, a number of key factors led the United States to be suspicious of the institution of Shinto on the U.S. mainland. As previously alluded to in Chapter 1, Japan had great success in its continental Asian military campaigns in part due to maintaining a uniform national goal and image under a reconstructed Shrine Shinto. This ideology and system of indoctrinating civilians and soldiers alike to follow the national agenda was used as a justification for Japan's conquest. The government would describe its Asian military campaign as a *seisen* 聖戦, or holy war, and it fueled public support for the campaign with popular music, radio broadcasts, and theatrical productions praising the invasions.<sup>73</sup> As these image of Shinto and Japanese people became crystalized in the minds of ordinary Americans, social and political repercussions for the Japanese in Hawai'i became more palpable.

By 1935, the Japanese community was described by Hawai'i Governor Joseph B. Poindexter as "...part and parcel of our community, our government, our institutions."<sup>74</sup> The majority of *Nisei* were not laboring as plantation workers anymore, but they were running for public office, or working for private businesses. However integral to Hawaiian business and society they may have been, local Japanese began to be suspected of having split allegiances. These suspicions were relatively subdued before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, but those outside the Japanese community avoided interactions in public

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<sup>73</sup> Kimura, pg. 204.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, pg. 209.

according to Kimura, Hazama, and Komeiji's collective recounts of the local Japanese experiences. Insistence on expressing traditional Japanese cultural values, maintaining what was perceived as non-American standards of living, lobbying for higher living wages, and the abundance of Japanese language schools were the major areas of critique and stereotyping.<sup>75</sup>

While social tensions in Hawai'i rose alongside the increased aggression of the militarized Japanese nation, the Kotohira shrine was expanding. As membership increased to include over 1,200 families, the shrine expanded its facilities to include a community center, an archery range, a martial arts studio, an outdoor theatre, and a sumo ring in 1936.<sup>76</sup> As it was in the 1920s with the Kaka'ako enshrinement of *Ebisu*, the Kotohira shrine at Kapalama in Kalihi continued to expand its base through the inclusion of more and more *kami*. In the early 1930s, *bunrei* were received from Shirasaki Hachimangū of Yamaguchi-ken, and from Ōtaki Jinja of Hiroshima-ken.<sup>77</sup> The inclusion of these other deities continued to fuel growth, and were part of the influx of funds and attendance that allowed the shrine to expand its infrastructure in 1936. As a result of the inclusion of these new deities, the shrine celebrated the festivals of Kotohira, Ōtaki, and Shirasaki Hachimangū all under the same roof.

This openness to the inclusion of various deities is an important topic when discussing Shinto generally, and KJDT specifically. First, it is not entirely uncommon for

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<sup>75</sup> Kinjo, pg. 30.

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>.

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>.

a shrine in Japan to merge with or to acquire another shrine. For example, in 1906, an Imperial edict required many unranked village shrines to surrender their land, to the government without compensation, and in turn, the government would install priests to perform state rites and rituals.<sup>78</sup> In these cases, the State Shinto institution was absorbing the land, edifice, and *kami* contained in the many village shrines affected by this edict. The *kami* remained present, but the focus of the shrine was skewed toward government sanctioned activities. This example is evidence of shrines merging under the pressure of legally enforced *Jinja gōshi* 神社合祀 (shrine mergers), but there are more organic examples to be found.

In her chapter on Edo period shrines and pilgrimages, Hardacre describes a chapel in Kobinata, in Edo, that hosted a pantheon of deities. This chapel, called Dainichi-dō, was established as an urban “prayer temple,” and had Shōtoku Taishi, Izanagi, Izanami, Inari, Konpira, various gongen, Hosso-gami, and many more deities enshrined to attract religious tourism and local patronage.<sup>79</sup> This kind of prayer temple or chapel was not uncommon in the 17th century, and many similarly organized institutions sprouted up along major religious pilgrimage routes between Osaka and Edo to attract business, despite the construction of new shrines being outlawed in 1685.<sup>80</sup> While this second example is not two distinct shrines combining, it is more reflective of the fluid, combinatory nature of veneration present in Shinto for centuries before arriving in

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<sup>78</sup> <http://eos.kokugakuin.ac.jp/modules/xwords/entry.php?entryID=1105>.

<sup>79</sup> Hardacre, pg. 267.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

Hawai`i. People prayed to the *kami* because they wanted to venerate that specific *kami*, either as part of a pilgrimage, or in their day-to-day lives. The fact that these *kami* came from major shrines across the country is of little importance to patrons, but the opportunity to pray or give thanks is highly valued by the descendants of immigrants. This multi-deity institution from the 1600s is similar to the Hawai`i Kotohira shrine(s) in that it provides a venue for practitioners to observe and pray to deities, while they are far from the deities major shrine.

The Kotohira shrine in Kalihi shares another similarity with the Dainichi-dō example from centuries prior, namely, adjustment to its surrounding religious economy. It is difficult to say with certainty that Rev. Misao Isobe of the Kalihi Kotohira shrine included the Shirasaki Hachimangū and Ōtaki Jinja deities for the purpose of profit. Becoming *gūji* in 1928, Rev. Isobe was himself trained at Shirasaki Hachimangū, and may have had personal motivations for including a *kami* familiar to him and his family. It is quite obvious, however, that the inclusion of two new *kami* from Yamaguchi and Hiroshima greatly deepened the pockets of Kotohira Jinsha in Kalihi. As discussed, the Yamaguchi and Hiroshima *kenjinkai* had the highest membership of the prefectural groups, thus attracting more attendants to *matsuri* and fundraising events from these two demographics was vital to the shrines economic stability in the 1930s. Like the Dainichi-dō chapel, the Kalihi Kotohira Jinsha took advantage of the state of its surrounding religious economy. As an eleemosynary<sup>81</sup> group, the Kalihi shrine was dependent on the strategic elevation of its status in the landscape of Japanese Hawaiian religious

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<sup>81</sup> A legal classification for institutions that subsist primarily from charity.

institutions. If the shrine had not made improvements to its value among the Japanese communities in Hawai`i, it would have likely closed its doors.

As the community grew in size, the 1936 renovations and additions afforded the Hawai`i Kotohira more outlets and opportunities to express their heritage and cultural pride. The shrine's *torii* was repositioned, and a *temizuya* 手水舎 (hand washing pavillion) was donated by the *fujin-kai* (women's club). As the period of mass immigration and shrine construction faded, the growth of *Nisei* in the Hawaiian business landscape and the improvements to the Hawai`i Kotohira community property forecasted an auspicious stride into the 1940s. Yet, December 7, 1941 injected a cataclysmic turn of events into the story of Hawaiian Shinto for the Japanese living in Hawai`i, and greatly impacted the course of the Hawai`i Kotohira shrines history.

## CHAPTER 3

### War, Tension, and the War's Impact

The bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 was the single most impactful event to occur on Hawaiian soil since James Cook arrived in the islands in 1778. Cook's arrival brought with it the unification of the Hawaiian Islands under King Kamehameha the Great, disease, Christianity, and a complete shift in Hawai'i's social order and political history. These changes were manifold, often regrettable, and entirely irreversible from the Hawaiian perspective. The same can be said about December 7, 1941; the vulnerability of the port to foreign air strike incited fear in Hawai'i residents and United States officials alike, and this tragic sneak-attack hastened Hawai'i down the path from territory to statehood. This infamous event of World War II triggered the United States military involvement in Asia, and eventually in Europe. Eventually, this Pacific territory of the United States took center stage in the war effort, and was used as a hub for strategic advances toward Japan.

For the Kotohira shrines and all other Shinto shrine communities in the Hawaiian Islands, tension and suspicion morphed into deportation and surveillance. The hyper-nationalist and militaristic traits that characterized State Shinto had, in the eyes of the United States, manifested in devastating fashion at Pearl Harbor. Because of this, many priests of local shrines were either interned or deported. The F.B.I., with the help of former University of Hawaii professor Shunzo Sakamaki,<sup>82</sup> had already compiled a

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<sup>82</sup> Gusukuma, Chance. *Nisei Daimyo: The Life of Shunzo Sakamaki*. M.A. Thesis, University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1998

“blacklist” of potential threats to national security in anticipation of conflict with Japan, and its agents quickly rounded up Japanese community leaders across the Hawaiian Islands and on the mainland.<sup>83</sup> Rev. Isobe Misao of Hawaiʻi Kotohira Jinsha in Kalihi was immediately interned, and later deported in 1943. In his absence, the community gathered at the shrine to make slippers and other goods to send to those injured by the Pearl Harbor attack. Despite this well-wishing project, official shrine activities ceased with the reverend’s internment, and all ties to Ōtaki Jinja, Kotohira-gū, and Shirasaki Hachimangū were publicly severed. The Kakaʻako Kotohira shrine closed its doors and disbanded in 1944, and its priest, Isobe Naohisa, brother of the Kalihi Kotohira shrine’s priest, left his post, possibly as a result of his internment.<sup>84</sup> The priests and immediate family members of most Shinto shrines were interned across the Hawaiian Islands, as well as members of the Isei community. Any direct relation to the institution of Shinto, or the simple fact that one was a first-generation immigrant gave the United States reason to fear the Japanese in Hawaiʻi, and the tragedy of Pearl Harbor was used to justify their internment. In what KJDT publicly describes as the “worst abuse of government authority in the history of the U.S.,” thousands of Japanese residents of Hawaiʻi were interned at Sand Island, Honouliuli, on Oʻahu, and other locations on Maui, Kauai, Lanai,

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<sup>83</sup> Kinjo, pg. 24.

<sup>84</sup> Gomes, pg. 62. It must be noted that Gomes often confuses the two Kotohira shrines, often referring to them as one edifice, or describing the story of the wrong priest for the wrong shrine. This confusion is understandable, as the two priests were brothers both called Reverend Isobe. The reverend Misao Isobe of the Kalihi Kotohira shrine was interned, deported, and later returned in 1952. His brother, reverend Naohisa Isobe, is not documented in Gomes or Maeda as interned on a specific date, but these records are likely lost due to the shrine’s decision to dissolve in 1944.

Molokai, and on the Big Island.<sup>85</sup> The social consequences of the internment process were particularly dire in Hawai`i, breaking apart communities and instilling further suspicion and fear among civilians.<sup>86</sup>

The Kaka`ako Kotohira shrine closed in part because of the social ramifications of the bombing and resulting internment. Kimura notes that many Isei immigrants were under constant threat and feared arrest. For so-called “alien” Japanese, buying or selling liquor, transmitting or listening to Japanese language radio broadcasts, or being in public during blackouts were grounds for arrest in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor.<sup>87</sup> In addition, any conduct that could be interpreted as “aiding the enemy” was illegal under General order No.5, issued on December 8, 1941. The entire Isei generation spoke Japanese, which was suspicious activity in and of itself, as far as the military and police were concerned. Many lost their jobs and were constantly being observed whenever they engaged in business or left the confines of their homes. Because of these restrictions in the public sphere, attendance at shrines fell dramatically. Public display of Japanese cultural heritage in Hawai`i, including speaking Japanese or participating in Japanese religious services was neither wise nor safe during this period. For these reasons and more, it can be deduced that the Kaka`ako Kotohira shrine was pressured to close its doors forever.

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<sup>85</sup> See <http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>, Gomes chapter 2, Kimora chapter 14.

<sup>86</sup> It is important to note that unlike the mainland Japanese communities that were interned almost in their entirety, this was neither practical nor plausible in Hawai`i. Peoples of Japanese ancestry made up nearly half the population, and by extension a huge portion of Hawai`i labor. Instead, only the F.B.I. blacklist person of interest were targeted.

<sup>87</sup> Kimura, pg. 216.



The Kalihi Kotohira shrine stayed open without a priest until 1946. On April 6, 1946, the members of the community announced that the shrine would close temporarily. This closure too was undoubtedly a result of the war-period tension, and the temporary cessation of meetings and activities was a decision made for the sake of survival. In order to avoid suspicion, or even being interned themselves, close friends would reportedly shun one another if a family member was interned, for fear that any signs of compassion or empathy might be grounds for unwanted investigation.<sup>88</sup> Another contributing factor in Hawai'i Kotohira's temporary closure was undoubtedly the *kattagumi*<sup>89</sup> 勝った組 (victory [already achieved] groups), who reportedly held meetings at Katō Jinja and Kotohira Jinja. *Kattagumi* were, (according to Gomes and Kimura) associations that made up less than 5% of the Isei population; they met in secret, believing that the United States was in fact losing the war with Japan.<sup>90</sup> While the Pacific War was nearing its conclusion in 1945, the strongly, anti-American sentiments of the *kattagumi* were drawing unwanted attention to the shrine, and to the Palama-Kalihi Japanese community in particular. Gomes notes a concentration of *kattagumi* activity in the Palama-Kalihi area, which is the same neighborhood where the Hawai'i Kotohira shrine still stands

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<sup>88</sup> Kinjo, pg. 29.

<sup>89</sup> Occasionally *kachigumi* 勝ち組 in some publications. Newspapers sourced by Gomes, and interviews conducted by Kimura refer to both spellings of the word. *Kattagumi* may be a pronunciation more common among Japanese immigrant families to Hawai'i, reflecting the *chugoku-ben* accent of prefectures like Yamaguchi and Hiroshima.

<sup>90</sup> Gomes, pg. 66, Kimura, pg.351.

today. The updated KJDT self-published history does not acknowledge the meetings as a motivator for the shrines temporary closure.

### **Trading with the Enemy: The Post-War Period, and Legal Battles**

The Pacific War (and the Second World War more broadly) ended shortly after the horrendous and infamous nuclear strikes carried out on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in August of 1945. Some Hawaiian shrines began to reopen their doors thereafter, but this postwar period would be characterized by a continuation of conflict for Hawaiian Shinto shrines. Hawai`i Kotohira shrine officially reopened its doors in December of 1947, despite the fact that Rev. Isobe was still in Japan. Less than 6 months later, the federal government seized Hawai`i Kotohira's assets, and raided the shrine.<sup>91</sup> This repossession was sanctioned under the Trading with the Enemy Act, which was passed into law in 1917.<sup>92</sup> The Trading with the Enemy Act was used to confiscate German-American immigrant properties and businesses in the past, and was one of the justifications for the Japanese-American internment as well. Other shrines across Hawai`i had their assets seized by the federal government, including Hawai`i Izumo Taishakyo Mission, Hawai`i Daijingū Temple, and Wahiawa Daijingū among others.<sup>93</sup>

The seizure of shrine assets was not taken lightly, and the community of Hawai`i Kotohira Jinsha took legal action against the United States. Eliciting the services of the

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<sup>91</sup> <http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>.

<sup>92</sup> Gross, Daniel A. "The U.S. Confiscated Half a Billion Dollars in Private Property During WWI." Smithsonian.com. July 28, 2014. Accessed March 30, 2018.

<sup>93</sup> Gomes, pg. 62.

firm Roberston, Castle, and Anthony, Kotohira Jinsha sued, “the State of Hawaii and the Federal Alien Land Office for misusing Section 9 of the Trading with the Enemy Act against a civilian organization not under the influence of the Japanese government and also damages for wrongful seizure and detention” (<http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>). In the supplementary opinion filed on June 5, 1950, in the case of Kotohira Jinsha versus McGrath, the court ruled in favor of the plaintiff, returning all assets to the shrine, and admitting fault on the side of the government in its infringement upon the First Amendment rights of the plaintiff.<sup>94</sup> The shrine reopened, and celebrated an Americanized Thanksgiving version of the Autumn *matsuri*, the first festival held on shrine property since 1941. KJDT is very proud of the fact that it was the first Japanese religious institution to file suit against the government for its illegal actions during and after the war, and other shrines such as Hawai`i Izumo Taishakyo Mission and Hawai`i Daijingu pursued subsequent similar actions.<sup>95</sup>

While the lawsuit was a success on the side of Hawai`i Kotohira Jinsha, the repossession was not without its own “casualties.” In an interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa of KJDT, they explained that the seizure of assets included not only the

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<sup>94</sup> Kotohira Jinsha v. McGrath, 90 F. Supp. 892 (D. Haw. 1950) US District Court for the District of Hawaii - June 5, 1950. (<https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/90/892/1505317/>)

It is interesting to note that the first amendment right cited in the case was the protection against any government agent seizing property on basis of disagreement of religious or philosophical teaching.

<sup>95</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.

Irene Takizawa was particularly proud of this fact, and described the history of KJDT in this period as “trailblazing.”

repossession of land, but that many documents and items stored inside were damaged or lost before the shrine was returned to the community.<sup>96</sup> In addition, the shrine was not maintained while in the government's possession, and maintenance had to be performed immediately following the legal battle. Ultimately, there was no compensation for the loss of documents and property in the form of damages, and there are key pieces of shrine history that are likely, lost forever as a result of the unlawful seizure of Hawai'i Kotohira Jinsha.

Having endured both the war and a monumental legal battle, the struggle was still not finished for Kotohira Jinsha. The social anxiety about all things Japanese did not disappear with Japan's surrender, and the people of Hawai'i still openly mistrusted Shinto. In parts of his archival research on both newspapers and University of Hawai'i student projects in the years following the war, Gomes found that, "many in Hawaii wished simply that Shinto be completely disestablished in Hawaii with its priests all deported to Japan."<sup>97</sup> Hawaiian Shinto was legally recognized as separate and distinct from State Shinto, as was evidenced in *Kotohira Jinsha v. McGrath*, but the legal decision did little to sway public opinion. While some explained that Hawaiian Shinto was not to be held accountable for the rhetoric and violence associated with State Shinto, these voices were in the minority, and were articulated by the University community, or the shrine communities themselves. By 1955, the Hawai'i Shinto League had asked for and

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, pg. 69.

received an official ruling that Shinto would be recognized as a religion, and that shrines were entitled to their status as religious institutions.<sup>98</sup>

The end of the legal battles of the Hawaiian shrines marks the end of heightened tension and internment for KJDT. Many priests who were either interned or deported returned to their posts, including Rev. Isobe by 1952. In the years that followed, rapid reorganization and acculturation to the American religious landscape further molded KJDT and its patrons. The Isei and *Nisei* were aging, and third and fourth generation Japanese-Americans began to enter the community. With the changing times and new generations, KJDT changed priests nine times between 1952 and 1992. The shrine would also expand to include even more *kami* in its pantheon, as Hawai'i Kotohira Jinsha became Hawai'i Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu in the early 1980s. Of the handful of shrines that endured the war period, KJDT had a particularly successful period of acculturation and expansion in the following time period..

### **Expansion and Internal Struggles: 1952 to 1993**

The thirty-six year period of expansion and internal struggles at KJDT is characterized by three major events: the death of Rev. Isobe, the construction and addition of the Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine, and the rapid succession of priests in the late 1980s. These three factors are all colored by the growing acculturation of KJDT to its

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<sup>98</sup> See Gomes, pg. 70 and Maeda, pg. 41.

Both Maeda and Gomes note that most shrines had concluded their legal battles by the mid 1950s, but Hawai'i Izumo Taisha continued lawsuits until 1962 due to their shrine being gifted to the City and County of Honolulu and converted into a public park. In 1962, their case finally concluded and the shrine reopened.

postwar Hawaiian context. Becoming a state in 1959, Hawai`i itself was undergoing further Americanization in the years following the war, and Shinto communities were under pressure to do the same. Efforts to promote English in the Japanese community, the inclusion of American presidential images at shrines, and the flying of the American flag above shrines began before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. However, it was not until after the reopening of KJDT that these practices were visibly implemented without interruption. To this day, KJDT flies an American flag, and English is spoken about as often as Japanese during festivals or in conversation. The issue of American presidential representation is one that is addressed by Hansen at some length, and is also part of the Americanization of the community. It was in this period following the shrine's reopening that roots began to deepen in Hawai`i, through the inclusion of non-Japanese community members in events, as the acculturation to the Hawaiian and American lifestyles became more evident.

To commemorate the communal triumph over the United State's abuse of power, the Kotohira shrine legally changed its name from Kotohira Jinsha to Hawai`i Kotohira Jinsha in 1952. In the same year, the Fukuoka *kenjinkai* urged the returned Rev. Isobe to acquire a *bunrei* from Dazaifu Tenmangu.<sup>99</sup> This addition of a *kami* marks the first of many interactions between Dazaifu Tenmangu in Fukuoka and Hawai`i Kotohira Jinsha, and the two shrines were eventually connected formally. Other additions and changes happening in the mid 1950s reflected a change of attitude regarding the surrounding community. The Kotohira shrine focused on bolstering and internally promoting Japanese

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<sup>99</sup> <http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>

culture almost exclusively through the end of the Pacific War. There was little engagement with the local non-Japanese people of Hawai`i, which proved to be a partially alienating element of the early Hawaiian Shinto practice. As the generations of Japanese immigrants began to intermarry with other local populations, some shrine attendees were naturally exposing the community to new faces and cultures. In an effort to represent local Japanese culture in a more positive way, by contrast with its wartime portrayals of betrayal and fanaticism, Hawai`i Kotohira Jinsha sponsored an international sumo tournament between an all-star Japanese high school squad against some Hawaiian high schoolers in 1956<sup>100</sup>. Events like this sumo tournament were activities for the O`ahu community, and bridged gaps between Japan, Japanese-Americans, and other locals.

Aside from including other locals in the sumo event or in fundraising projections of *katsudō-shashin*<sup>101</sup> 活動写真 (motion pictures,) more visible adaptations to Hawaiian and American life can be seen from period photography. In an article for the *Pacific Historical Review* in May 2014, Yujin Yaguchi discusses the historicity of a book entitled *Watashi no Umareta Hawaii, Where We Were Born* written by Miike Noburu and Takahara Shiro in 1942. Yaguchi bases some of his analysis of this book by referencing a

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<sup>100</sup> <http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>

<sup>101</sup> *Katsudō-shashin* 活動写真 is Meiji/Taishō period terminology for movies, often translated as “motion picture(s).” This somewhat antiquated language was likely used by older generations of the Japanese community in Hawai`i. Just as “motion picture” eventually became “movie” after the advent of “talking pictures” or “talkies,” *katsudō-shashin* eventually was replaced by *eiga* 映画 in common Japanese speech. The two terms were used somewhat interchangeably in both languages, as was likely the case when shrines like KJDT held their fundraisers. On the KJDT website, there appears to be a mistranslation listed as “movie viewings,” which may be a mistranslation.

second book of photography, *Nikkei America Jin*, published in 1956 as part of a series of photo books by Iwanami Shoten. Yaguchi explains that in many ways, the Japanese who consumed the photographic publications in Japan saw the possibility for a reinvention of the self through their Americanized ex-patriots. The men and women depicted in the books collection of photographs were mostly Nisei, wearing American-style clothing and working in a number of settings including factories, plantations, or around their respective houses. On the other hand, *Watashi no Umareta Hawaii, Where We Were Born* presents the Japanese in Hawai'i as being victims of the American imperial powers, describing life in Hawai'i as oppressive in many areas.<sup>102</sup> While it may be true that in the plantation setting many Japanese were subject to all kinds of brutalities and injustices, this kind of wartime rhetoric was encouraged in the 1940s in Japan as justification for military action. Contrary to Japanese propaganda, there was room for Japanese advancement in Hawaiian society, as evidenced by the sprouting of numerous private businesses, banks, and the rise of Nisei politicians. These banks and businesses fell under scrutiny as did almost all peoples of Japanese descent during the war, but the overall critical tone of the book and its arguments are debunked by Yaguchi and others.

The photography from *Nikkei America Jin*, however, shows the transformation and acculturation of many Nisei Japanese to Hawai'i, and the almost stereotypical 1950s American lifestyles that they led. In the 187 photos, scenes of Japanese-Americans leading lifestyles that were unheard of in Japan are the primary focus of Yaguchi's

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<sup>102</sup> Yaguchi, Yujin. "Japanese Reinvention of Self through Hawai'i's Japanese Americans." *Pacific Historical Review* 83, no. 2 (2014): 333-49



analysis. Particularly, throngs of women in American-style clothing working at factories, or a woman cleaning her large home furnished with things like a television, vacuum cleaner, and refrigerator piqued Yaguchi's interest. These photographs of the conveniences of modern American life, as well as the industriousness of Nisei are, according to Yaguchi, juxtaposed with the common lifestyles of women in Japan in the 1950s. Material wealth in the form of nice appliances, and female agency in the workplace were exciting prospects for people reading *Nikkei America Jin*.

While the Americanization of the Nisei is visible, the photographs further depict participation in traditional Japanese customs as well. Nisei cooking Japanese food, competing in Judo, practicing *ikebana* (flower arrangement), and celebrating *bon odori* (bon dance festival) alongside non-Japanese locals are catalogued in the collection.<sup>103</sup> The Nisei are shown maintaining a sense of their Japanese identity in the Hawaiian setting, and sharing their culture with other locals. Other pictures that illustrate this cultural mixing and sharing include an interracial Shinto wedding service overseen by a priest in traditional garb, while the bride and groom wear western-style wedding attire. Additionally, people attending Buddhist services on Sundays are described as participating in Christian-style Sunday schools, and wear prototypical "Sunday Best" at their community temples.<sup>104</sup> From these many examples, it is clear that the Japanese in Hawai'i were entering a highly visible, postwar period of acculturation into Hawaiian and

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<sup>103</sup> Yaguchi, Yujin. "Japanese Reinvention of Self through Hawai'i's Japanese Americans." *Pacific Historical Review* 83, no. 2 (2014): 333-49

<sup>104</sup> These practices are described by Yaguchi, and are also depicted at length in the *Aloha Buddha* documentary film.

American life. Aside from photo evidence, various testimonials from Nisei and Sansei express a desire to move away from a traditional Japanese lifestyle into a Hawaiian-American lifestyle. The Nisei and Sansei were born in Hawai'i, growing up mostly speaking English and engaging with the culture and people of Hawai'i. This acculturation was a natural product of generational immigrants, and was in part out of necessity rather than any cultural preference. In discussing Japanese immigrant parents' outlook on the acculturation of their children, Gomes states that:

There was a definite attachment to a Japan, perhaps more so to the idealized village life the first generation left behind, but there was no mistaking that even with their loyalties, most were committed to the success of their children, and in order to achieve that success, there had to be an acculturation of American values, and loosening of tradition, even if it meant cultural alienation from their own children.<sup>105</sup>

From this perspective, it is clear that Americanization was necessary for the Japanese in Hawai'i during this period. By the same token, similar adaptations were made in the area of Japanese religion in Hawai'i. The reopening of the Hawai'i Kotohira shrine after the war ended was indicative of not only a triumph over government oppression, but also the sign of a new beginning for the shrine.

A further, more tragic indicator of change came in April 1958, when Rev. Misao Isobe passed away. Rev. Isobe had shepherded the attendants of the shrine through the most trying time in its short history, and the community mourned for several months until a suitable replacement was found. Not only had Rev. Isobe himself been interned and deported, but he was part of the effort to reacquire rights to the shrine's property. A man

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<sup>105</sup> Gomes, pg. 49.

who also had endured internment and deportation, Rev. Kunisuke Sakai, would take his place as the fourth *gūji* in 1959.

During Rev. Sakai's tenure, relations and communications between the Hawai'i Kotohira shrine and Dazaifu Tenmangu in Japan increased. In 1960, the *gūji* of Dazaifu Tenmangu visited for a brief period. While the nature of this visit is largely unknown from the shrine's records, the following years indicate that this was the beginning of the process of officially partnering with Dazaifu Tenmangu. In 1964, many small shrines were constructed, including one for Dazaifu Tenmangu. The construction of smaller shrines was done throughout O'ahu Island, and was the result of reconnecting with shrines in Japan, and a major influx of cash. Relationships with shrines in Japan began to rekindle in the 1960s, as the scrutiny from the state and federal government had subsided almost entirely. Principally, Kotohira-gū and Dazaifu Tenmangu sent visitors many times between 1960 and 1980. In the year 1962, just over 30,000 square feet of land were sold to the state of Hawai'i for \$122,250.<sup>106</sup> This land was built over as part of the construction for the H-2 interstate highway. The influx of funds was used to repair the shrine's infrastructure, which remained somewhat dilapidated from neglect during the war year. The *temizuya* and the priests living quarters were repaired, and a community hall was constructed adjacent to the shrine itself.<sup>107</sup> While the land was sold off, the repairs and additions of buildings contributed to the overall growth of the shrine and its ability to serve patrons. The community center still stands to this day, and is used for meetings and festivals. The smaller shrines built in the late 1960s have closed their doors,

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<sup>106</sup> <http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

but the records of the shrines being constructed are indicative of KJDTs influence on O`ahu in the Japanese community.

Continuing on the path to partnership, Dazaifu Tenmangu continued to send visitors to the then titled Hawai`i Kotohira Shrine, and this relationship brought with it even more funding. During this period of growth after the end of the legal dispute, both Kotohira-gū and Dazaifu Tenmangu kept KJDT open and thriving by way of financial contribution, and also advertising.<sup>108</sup> The Japan-based shrines investments in Hawai`i were not limited to KJDT, as other shrines were financed by Shinto interests in Japan.<sup>109</sup> As Hawai`i's economy is heavily reliant upon tourism, KJDT and other shrines market themselves to Japanese tourists, and offer ritual services in exchange for donations to participants. This religious tourism became a focus at KJDT during the 1970s and 1980s, and persists today.

After years of building a relationship, the Dazaifu Tenmangu shrine was built on Hawai`i Kotohira shrine property in 1982. The construction of the shrine was executed entirely by volunteer laborers, and the groundbreaking ceremony was visited by fifteen priests from Dazaifu Tenmangu in Japan. Between 1971 and 1983, the increased involvement that culminated in a partnership with Dazaifu Tenmangu was overseen by an unordained priest named Seiji Takai, who was trained at a local shrine in the McCully area. In discussing the partnership with Dazaifu Tenmangu, present day Rev. Takizawa and his wife Irene explain that the relationships with Dazaifu Tenmangu and Kotohira-gū grew stronger in this period for two primary reasons: funding and implied legitimacy.

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<sup>108</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.

<sup>109</sup> See Gomes chapter 3, and Kinjo chapter 2.

Part of the Japan-based shrine's interest in Hawai'i was due to the large Japanese population, and this interest expresses itself on a religious level in relationships like the one between KJDT and the main branch shrine in Japan. As discussed by Gomes and Yaguchi, successive generations after the Isei maintain some interest in their Japanese identities, and connecting directly to Japan legitimizes ancestral claims on a level deeper than claiming heritage alone. While many successive generations did not attend the Japanese language schools like the Nisei did, interest in all Japanese cultural practices began to resurge after the war period. This resurgence was manifested in the official partnership between Hawai'i Kotohira shrine and Dazaifu Tenmangu, creating legitimate institutional ties between it and another prefecture. The Fukuoka *kenjinkai* initiated this partnership by requesting a *bunrei* years earlier, and an official integration of the shrines, and the legal name change to Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu became finalized.<sup>110</sup>

The succession of head priests in this period was in many ways offset by the financial support and infrastructural growth of the shrine. Gomes and Maeda describe KJDT as 'without a priest' during this period, and this is true in many ways.<sup>111</sup> A lack of leadership in these years was the result of deaths, a lack of interest in extended residence among expat Japanese nationals, and the unique position of Hawaiian Shinto generationally. Between 1988 and 1993, the shrine changed head priests five times, bringing in priests on assignment from Dazaifu Tenmangu in Kyushu on a short-term

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<sup>110</sup> Legally, the two names are hyphenated as Hawai'i Kotohira Jinsha - Hawai'i Dazaifu Tenmangu .

<sup>111</sup> Gomes, pg. 84, Maeda pg. 42-43.

basis.<sup>112</sup> This brief era of flux came after the death of Reverend Shigeo Fujino (1918–1984), who served as a priest for 19 consecutive years following his return to Hawaiʻi in 1961.<sup>113</sup> Reverend Fujino and his uncle Reverend Kameo Tahara were longstanding symbols of a bygone era for Hawaiian Shinto; both Fujino and Tahara were interned in 1943 and were eventually deported in 1945.<sup>114</sup> The death of Fujino, therefore marks the end of the single longest stint in the collective shrines priesthood.<sup>115</sup> Fujino’s death also signified a severance from the persecution and marginalization that KJDT had undergone during and after the Second World War. The priesthood as well as the management and daily operations of the shrine, are often family affairs in Japan, and the death of Reverend Fujino was in a way the end of one family’s dynastic of leadership on Oʻahu. Having an unordained priest like Seiji Takai, or a short term priest like the handful who hailed from Dazaifu Tenmangu in Fukuoka is a result of a complete lack of infrastructure in Hawaiʻi regarding training. All of the ordained priests came from Japan, and there was no way for those born in Hawaiʻi to educate and certify themselves without going to Japan to study. Taking up the occupation of Hawaiian Shinto priest was, for the visiting priest, an unattractive position in that they did not have familial, or otherwise substantive ties to

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<sup>112</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Parents and participants at *Shichigosan*. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. November 28th, 2017.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Gomes 2007, pg.62. Reverend Fujino and Tahara were both involved with the Kaka’ako Kotohira Jinsha leadership before the shrine elected to dissolve their shrine and property assets between 1943-44.

<sup>115</sup> This is a reference to the Kaka’ako iteration of Kotohira Jinsha, as well as the Ishizuchi Jinja and Hawaiʻi Daijingū where the brothers served stints as priests (<http://www.e-shrine.org/history.html>)

Hawai'i to keep them there. Based on this, it would seem that there is a necessitation of legitimizing Hawaiian shrines by associating themselves with institutions connected to Japan, and in effect, make Hawaiian shrines branch shrines. To some extent, this weakens the argument that Hawaiian Shinto, or at least KJDT, is representative of an NRM. There are fluctuations in the ways that Hawaiian shrines express traits identifiable as NRMs, and the years following the Pacific War exhibit a return to a traditional Japanese identity. This period of flux ended in 1994, and the shrine was propelled into the twenty-first century by a new family, with plans for financial independence and further reforms.

#### **Masa Takizawa and Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu since 1994**

In June of 1994, Reverend Masa Takizawa was installed as the twelfth *Gūji* of KJDT. Reverend Takizawa came from Nagoya Japan and moved into an upstairs flat located on the shrine grounds at 1239 Olomea Street in Kalihi.<sup>116</sup> As part of the fieldwork for this project, I have interviewed Reverend Takizawa and his wife Irene multiple times, discussing the history of the shrine and the obstacles they encounter in running it. My first meeting with Masa and Irene took place on October 30, 2017 in Moili'ili. I met with the couple at a local cafe. What follows is a paraphrasing of the Takizawa's decision to move to Hawai'i as priest and wife.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> The shrine moved addresses after receiving funds from the state during the construction of the H-2 highway, but the grounds existed in their same location.

<sup>117</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.

Starting in the late 1970s, Masa Takizawa worked Japanese salary man or *kaishain* 会社員. Reverend Takizawa was working in sales in some capacity, at an unspecified company. One of Reverend Takizawa's business accounts took him to O'ahu in the 1980s, and he enjoyed his trip very much. He also met his wife-to-be Irene on O'ahu; her family had immigrated to Hawai'i from Japan when she was three years old. Rev. Takizawa was born and raised in Nagoya, and had attended family gatherings, *hatsumōde*, and other events at shrines while growing up there. After about ten years as a *kaishain*, Rev. Takizawa underwent a complete change of focus and career. Yearning for work that more positively impacted the lives of others, Masa Takizawa began his two-year training program to become a Shinto priest at Kōgakkan University.

When asked what the priestly pedagogy looked like at Kōgakkan University, Rev. Takizawa explained that it is not dissimilar to a Masters degree or Masters of Divinity program found in religious studies in the United States; Rev. Takizawa engaged in intensive language study, particularly in *kanbun* 漢文 (classical Chinese) so that he could read ancient Shinto related texts, such as the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. The reverend also described rigorous courses on Japanese history, and the various ways that Buddhism as an imported tradition from Korea and China became interwoven with the native Shinto tradition. After his years of study, Rev. Takizawa successfully passed his examinations given by the The Association of Shinto Shrines (*Jinja Honchō* 神社本庁,) and worked for a shrine in Nagoya for just under a year before being appointed the *Gūji* of KJDT in 1994.



Both Irene Takizawa and her Reverend husband are responsible for a great many changes implemented at KJDT since his arrival in the mid 90s. One noteworthy change about which the couple expressed great pride was the fact that KJDT has become financially independent from both Dazaifu Tenmangu and Kotohira Jinsha. The Takizawa's remember the days of a heavy dependence on Dazaifu Tenmangu in particular, stating that the shrine would annually send visiting priests, *miko* 巫女 (female assistants), and funds to KJDT. Konpira-san in Japan also sent money and visitors, but at a much lower and steadily declining rate. Mrs. Takizawa in particular expressed great pride in the couple's financial stability, citing her engagement with digital advertising as a contributing factor. The shrine's regularly updated website (<http://www.e-shrine.org>) was constructed as a part of the Takizawa's effort to keep patrons up-to-date in the digital era. In addition to the website, online advertising, newsprint and magazine ads, and old fashioned word-of-mouth were areas of focus in the mid to late 90s for Mrs. Takizawa. When discussing the shrine and its use of social media (e.g. Facebook and Instagram), she explained that, "I think a big reason we have been so successful is because we are flexible and ready to change with the times. In the Internet age, people can connect in so many different ways to so many different things."<sup>118</sup> She elaborated on how blogs and paper advertisement used to be a primary focus for her, but because the shrine has increased so drastically in patronage, she now puts her energy into other areas, such as social media and the recruitment of volunteers.

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<sup>118</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.

This kind of advertising could be seen as proselytization, and to some extent, it actually does function as such; for example, the Takizawas placed ads to recruit more attendees for *matsuri*. The Takizawas themselves describe this kind of work as a form of proselytization, but noted that a primary motivator for most attendees was not religious devotion or curiosity. Instead, the couple noticed that the overwhelming rationale among KJDT patrons for their continued attendance and support was the fact that they were related to an Isei or Nisei Japanese-American, and that coming to the shrine was a habit that they had adopted from their parents or grandparents. Issues of separating religion and cultural identity are difficult to maneuver, particularly in Shinto. Both Takizawas explain that the belief structure and standards for attendance in Shinto as a global tradition are centered on identifying as Japanese, and that the religious stories or traditions are in large part not as important as the cultural ties. This claim is echoed by a number of scholars, who describe attendees of Shinto shrines in Japan as engaging in cultural participation rather than faith or belief-driven engagement.<sup>119</sup> The notion of KJDT attendees being motivated by their ancestors lends strength to the idea that Shinto in Hawai'i is about preservation of *Japaneseness* just as much as it is about community or religion. Both were forthright in describing Shinto as an ethnic tradition to some extent, and explained that Hawai'i has reprioritized the importance of Japanese ethnicity as it relates to engaging with a Shinto shrine. Because of how mixed cultures and families are on O'ahu,

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<sup>119</sup> Reader, Ian. *Religion in Contemporary Japan*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991, p.4-6. Reader describes a number of interviews and surveys of Japanese citizens describing themselves as non-religious, while still maintaining loose affiliations with certain Buddhist sects or local shrines. Statistics show nearly two-thirds of the population sample identifying as having 'no religious beliefs.'

many of the families who frequent KJDT neither speak nor maintain any semblance of Japanese culture in their private lives, and attend the shrine out of respect for their ancestors of Japanese heritage.<sup>120</sup>

Rev. Takizawa was very pointed in his speech about the relationship between KJDT and Hawai'i in a geographical sense. The Shinto of the past, according to Masa, is a tradition that people built with their hands and ideas, as a means to create a dialogue with nature and, by extension, *kami* who control the natural world. In Rev. Takizawa's view, "Shinto as a tradition is about two ideas: please and thank you. You say please to the gods when you want or need something, and you make offerings in rituals or festivals. When you get what you want, or when you want to express gratitude for what you have, you say thank you. This is the most simple way I can describe my tradition, my culture."<sup>121</sup> Pertaining to the Hawaiian Islands specifically, Masa Takizawa explained that his role as a Shinto priest and the role of the ancient Hawaiian *kahuna*<sup>122</sup> were essentially one and the same. Rev. Takizawa is quite unique in his syncretic thinking about priesthood, but his claim is not unfounded; the reverend is well aware of the native Hawaiian *kahuna* and their place in ancient society as it relates to maintaining societal peace, advising, and paying homage to naturalist spirits and gods. This kind of open-

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<sup>120</sup> "QuickFacts." U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Hawaii. July 2016. Accessed February 23, 2018. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/HI>

As of 2016, Hawai'i is listed as have 37% of the population with Asian ancestry, and over 23% of the population reporting two or more races or ethnicities.

<sup>121</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.

<sup>122</sup> Meaning a respected, educated individual that serves as a community and royal advisor in the areas of settling disputes, prophecy, philosophy, healing, and the spirits.

mindedness to the local environment and people is, according to the couple, a major reason for the continued growth and success of the shrine.

Pressing Rev. Takizawa on his claim, I asked a series of questions about the relationship between the shrine and the islands of Hawai`i. He explained to me that the geography and cultural history in Hawai`i were different from Japan that the differences inevitably manifest themselves at the shrine. These differences are embraced by Rev. Takizawa, and he explains how they affect the shrine on a religious level as well as a social level:

We use Hawaiian rock salt in purification rituals, and pay homage to the spirits in Hawai`i. Hawai`i is special because it is different, and we try to embrace the community into the Shinto tradition. People are all equal, and everyone exists alongside or under the *kami*. It does not matter if the people or the culture is mixed. Young people do not separate culture. It is older generations that say “this is Japanese, this is American or Hawaiian.” Shinto exists all over: Holland, Italy, France, Brazil. You must show respect for the land that you live in, but Shinto is universal in many ways. We say please and thank you to nature.<sup>123</sup>

The community hall built decades ago is now rented out to a Filipino language immersion school, where young children of Filipino ancestry are taught in a bilingual environment. During *matsuri* and special events, the school is rearranged to fit visitors and patrons. In the numerous *matsuri* that I attended as part of my research, a standout feature of the shrine was the mix of people in attendance. While seeing different sizes, shapes, and ethnicities is entirely commonplace in Hawai`i, seeing the mix of them all represented at a Shinto shrine is something remarkable. In a community that was once

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<sup>123</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.

exclusively Japanese, just a handful of decades ago, Masa and Irene Takizawa boast about the diversity of representation at their shrine:

We are nearing the seventh and eighth generation from the original Japanese immigrants to Hawai`i, and many of them don't look Japanese at all. A big part of why people come to our shrine is because it feels like the rest of Hawai`i, it feels like home. Some people never met their Japanese great-great-grandparents, but they come to show respect for their heritage.<sup>124</sup>

A mixed ethnic environment is not the limit of KJDT's unique position in comparison to years past, but it is a sign of the fluidity of Shinto as a tradition in Hawai`i. While it is true that the Japanese archipelago is and has been host to many different ethnic groups that have become part of an idyllic homogenous Japanese identity, it is the same homogenous and idealized Japan from which many Hawaiian Shinto parishioners construct part of their cultural identity. This is evidenced not only from interviewing the patrons of KJDT, but also by the way that KJDT and other shrines advertise and recruit patrons.

Irene Takizawa continues the effort to invite change by collaborating with local artists to design *omamori*<sup>125</sup> お守り (amulets) with Polynesian-style designs, giving a nod to the Hawaiian (and other Polynesian) hosts as well as patrons. The aforementioned religious tourism is still alive, and many Japanese nationals attend *hatsumōde* or *shichigosan* while taking a vacation in Hawai`i. Additionally, the religious tourism

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<sup>124</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.

<sup>125</sup> Traditional amulets covered in cloth to ward off dangers, or bring luck for specified situations.

element of the shrines finances is further supported by Japanese-Americans who want to save money on flights to Japan.<sup>126</sup> The attending couple evaluates that close to 90% of their visitors are locals, with around 10% of visitors coming from Japan or the mainland United States.

Another interesting example of modernization at KJDT is their use of Instagram. Like the *kenjinkai* using Facebook, KJDT regularly posts on Instagram about upcoming events, and advertises the many services they provide. While approximately 60% of the shrine's annual revenue comes from the *hatsumōde* festival, Rev. Takizawa performs other rituals for groundbreaking, marriage, and blessing infants as well. The couple also maintains relationships with academics in the United States and Japan, and a few Japanese researchers have visited and studied them in the past. Like any public relations account, the KJDT Instagram represents free advertising, and Irene Takizawa manages it on behalf of the shrine. At one point, it was Irene Takizawa's zeal for advertisement that drove the shrine from financial dependence to independence. Now, according to the couple, the focus is not on advertising, but on recruiting volunteers. The couple describe the New Years' Eve attendance numbers cresting at 10,000 people in recent years, and discusses the high-stress nature of the first week of the New Year. Volunteers dress as *miko*, serve *ozōni* and saké, and help both English and Japanese visitors navigate the festivities. Additionally, the shrine has a shuttle system that ferries attendees from nearby Damien High School's parking lot to the festivities. The bus service is provided free, and

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<sup>126</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Parents and participants at *Shichigosan*. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. November 28th, 2017.

also volunteer operated. Volunteers for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are an integral part of the preparation process leading up to the holiday, according to Mrs. Takizawa, who recruits close to 90 men, women, and children via word-of-mouth and social media.

Other major volunteer-driven events include *shichigosan*, the annual pet blessing, and sake tasting. These events are held annually, and the pet blessing has received a great deal of local news coverage.<sup>127</sup> Former Hawai'i Governor Neil Abercrombie attended the pet blessing regularly during his tenure, and the Takizawa family explained that they regularly have high profile guests on shrine premises. While these annual events are much smaller in scale, they still contribute to the shrine's economic viability, and the Takizawas welcome press opportunities to drum up more business. *Shichigosan* is a children's right of passage festival offered by many shrines and the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i. Many of the parents who attended the 2017 *shichigosan* explained that KJDT's ritual experience feels more formal or legitimate than those offered at other venues:

We come to this shrine because the kids really get an authentic experience. The Japanese Cultural Center feels like a children's fair or something. We want our kids to learn the proper way to walk, dress, and carry themselves. We are not full Japanese, but we think it is important for them to connect with their heritage.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> See <http://www.khon2.com/news/local-news/celebration-of-human-animal-bonds-at-annual-shinto-pet-blessing/901477154>.

<sup>128</sup> Crum, Richard. Interviews with Parents and Volunteers for *Shichigosan*. Personal interviews. Honolulu, HI. December 8th, 2017

*Shichigosan* has around 30 volunteers, most of whom help in dressing children in traditional Japanese garb, and teaching them how to walk properly and receive the blessing. The clothing is quite restrictive, so the children take their time getting used to moving around. Masa and Irene Takizawa expressed some frustration with parents who participate in the ritual purely to take cute pictures of their children, insisting that the parents wait until the blessing is complete to take photos. It is this insistence on respect for the tradition, it seems, that attending parents notice at KJDT. Rev. Takizawa, Mrs. Takizawa, and all of the volunteers devote a great deal of time and energy into providing an authentic cultural experience for the families of O`ahu, and are serious about their traditions. The aforementioned newborn baby blessings, groundbreaking ceremonies, and weddings constitute the remaining sources of shrine income. Rev. Takizawa estimates he performs around 300-400 private blessings in a year, each for a small fee. While only an estimate, Rev. Takizawa says around 80-90% of these blessings are for local families, homes, or businesses, and the remainder are performed for Japanese nationals.

After years of uncertainty regarding the priesthood of KJDT, Masa Takizawa along with his wife Irene have propelled the shrine into the twenty-first century. After twenty-four years of service to the community, the couple maintains that there is a future for Shinto in Hawai`i: “Hawai`i is very small, and it is therefore more simple to perpetuate beliefs and ideals. Many different kinds of people marry into Japanese



families, and we are proud to have more and more non-Japanese members.”<sup>129</sup> While the focus of the Takizawa family has shifted away from expansion and financial growth to maintenance of the status quo, they continue to pay attention to the younger generations. The shrine gives out scholarships every year, and donates especially to members who pursue Japanese studies.

In this chapter, the history of KJDT has been explored from its inception to the present. The backdrop of Japanese immigrant history, and Hawaiian Territorial and United States history helps provide the context of the KJDT story, but the place of KJDT as a religious tradition has only been partially addressed. It is clear that elements of more traditional, Japan-based Shinto are present in Hawai`i, and financial and cultural ties to Japan-based shrines have been undeniably influential. The issue of categorizing Hawaiian Shinto raises issues of definition, namely how to define Hawaiian Shinto. In chapter 1, this question was not answered directly, as the groundwork for KJDT had not been fully articulated. There is enough historical evidence at this point to address the claims of this project, and explore the particulars of defining an NRM, an import religion, and an ethnic tradition. Moving forward, KJDT’s iteration of Hawaiian Shinto will be referenced as it has been laid out in this chapter, and compared to the definitions and argument made by Stark and Bainbridge and others regarding NRMs.

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<sup>129</sup> Crum, Richard. Interviews with Parents and Volunteers for *Shichigosan*. Personal interviews. Honolulu, HI. December 8th, 2017

## CHAPTER 4

### **Defining a Space for Hawaiian Shinto: NRM, Sect, Cult, or Import?**

Just as Religious Studies is an inherently interdisciplinary field, the same can be said for the study of so-called “New Religions.” As this paper has thoroughly examined the history, politics, and economics of one specific group, theories of religion and new religions vary greatly depending on the scholar’s methodology. In general, the prevailing definitions are those offered by the leading scholars of New Religions including Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, J. Gordon Melton, and area specialists like Wilburn Hansen. According to Stark and Bainbridge, religion is something that involves belief, devotional practice, experiences, knowledge, and presupposes supernatural consequences.<sup>130</sup> The last dimension of their definition, namely, consequences, is a term that encompasses the positive and negative aspects of participating in a given religious tradition. A key feature of their description of new religions involves a social psychology-derived dissection of these consequences, using the term “compensators” to describe the benefits that membership in a religious organization offers to its participants. These compensators range from promises in the afterlife (dubbed otherworldly compensators and/or commitments), to promises of material wealth or the providing of simple material benefits (labeled worldly compensators and/or commitments). Some of the most valuable compensators, social compensators, are paramount in Stark and Bainbridge’s model. According to these theorists, it is the social benefit of belonging to a community, feeling

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<sup>130</sup>Stark, Rodney, and William Sims Bainbridge. *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation*. Berkley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 1985, pg. 5-12.

wanted or needed, and receiving positive reinforcement from like-minded individuals that is a fundamental motivator for joining any religious group. Religious traditions, in Stark and Bainbridge's view, function entirely via the relationship that organizations form with people regarding these compensators. The promise of compensation is what retains the interest of a religious group's members, and allows the institution to survive.

A large portion of *The Future of Religion* is dedicated to analyzing statistics for religious groups in the United States at varying points in history, focusing on surveys asking about beliefs, opinions, population percentages, and perceived tensions between a group and its surrounding community. This data is mostly descriptive of Abrahamic-derived sects of religious groups within the borders of the continental United States, and the data is therefore potentially inapplicable to the study of KDJT. The definitions of certain key terms, however, are of great importance. Specifically, the words "cult" and "sect" are painstakingly outlined in their work:

Both cults and sects are deviant religious bodies- that is, they are in a state of relatively high tension with their surrounding sociocultural environment. However, sects have a prior tie with another religious organization. To be a sect, a religious movement must have been founded by persons who left another religious body for the purpose of founding the sect. The term sect, therefore, applies only to schismatic groups...Because sects are schismatic groups, they present themselves to the world as something old. They left the parent body not to form a new faith, but to reestablish the old one, from which the parent body had "drifted"...Cults, with the exception to be noted, do not have a prior tie with another established religious body in the society in question. The cult may represent an alien (external) religion, or it may have originated in the hosts society, but through innovation, not fission...Imported cults often have little common culture with existing faiths; they may be old in some other society, but they are new and different in the importing society. Cults, then, represent a

deviant religious tradition in a society. In time, they may become the dominant tradition, in which case, there is no longer much tension between them and the environment...<sup>131</sup>

First, it must be made clear that the terms sect and cult in this field of study are not meant to be derogatory, but rather terms that more accurately describe a religion using a New Religious Studies framework. With regard to the term “deviant,” this signifies a deviation from the dominant religious tradition in a given religious landscape. From this deviance, a religious group becomes the target of scrutiny from other organizations, as well as nonmembers, and it experiences social tension with its surrounding community. The explanation of the term sect is relatively simple, and basically covers any group that splits from a parent tradition, or evolves out of a dominant tradition (e.g. Protestantism from Catholicism, Mahayana from early Theravada Buddhism, Mormonism and nineteenth century American “burned over” Protestant Christianity, etc.). In essence, we see that the study of so-called New Religions is heavily predicated on the span of time through which a tradition is being evaluated; Christianity around 40 or 50 C.E. is most certainly an NRM in this scheme and, more specifically, it was a sub-sect of an apocalyptic Jewish sect.

The term cult presents even more complications. Cults, they argue, by their nature can be labeled as such purely because they are foreign in origin, or because they are radically innovative, by comparison with the more dominant tradition. This puts further emphasis on the time and place in which a religious group exists, and implies that the

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<sup>131</sup> Stark and Bainbridge, pg. 25-26

status or label applied to a tradition will undoubtedly change with time. For example, Mormonism is discussed in the book as both a sect and a cult, since it focuses on the cult nature of the religion, due to the innovations and additions to Christian scripture, and the gradual decline of societal tension and growth into a regionally-dominant tradition, thus marking it as a sect.<sup>132</sup> In the case of a tradition arriving in a new environment, its status as a cult is partially attributed to its status as an “import tradition.”

In his chapter in *Teaching New Religions*, John Gordon Melton also discusses the idea of import traditions, describing ethnic traditions as something distinct from cults and sects. Ethnic traditions, he argues, are made up of an ethnic minority present among more dominant religious traditions and ethnic populations, and are usually transplanted from another country to serve an immigrant community.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, the ethnic traditions of Asian background in particular tend to refrain from active proselytization, Melton argues, since they focus their recruiting efforts on the immediate ethnic community in question. In the same book, David G. Bromley mentions ethnically-derived NRMs, including Shinto, as an influence on a small handful of groups. His publication, like Stark and Bainbridge's book, largely focuses on NRMs derived from Christianity, particularly within the continental United States. Shinto is mentioned, but the bulk of these studies in English focus on the numerous Christian NRMs.

Wilburn Hansen's previously cited article offers more of a hypothesis than a set of definitions. Crediting Maeda's research, Hansen describes the formation of Hawai'i

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<sup>132</sup> See Stark and Bainbridge, chapters 7, 11, and 12.

<sup>133</sup> Melton, Chapter 1 in Bromley, David G. *Teaching New Religious Movements*. New York: Oxford University, 2007.

Daijingū, noting that the layperson who founded the shrine was a practitioner of fox possession.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, Hansen predicates his claims about Hawai`i Daijingū and its status as a New Religious Movement on an argument suggested by Inoue Nobutaka; Sect Shinto, Buddhist-derived NRMs, and Shinto-derived NRMs already makeup a significant portion of Japanese New Religious traditions. Other claims by Inoue, endorsed by Hansen, posits Shrine (or State) Shinto as more authentic than, or at the very least, as a parent tradition to Sect Shinto. The imperial divinity sanctioned by Shrine/State Shinto and the multiple religious influences of Sect Shinto have intersected and blended throughout history. Inoue's argument credits State Shinto, to some extent, as predating or at least holding influence over Sect Shinto, which is not entirely accurate. The concept of state-sponsored Shinto ideology and practice is a product of the Meiji Restoration, and does not hold retroactive superiority or dominion over past Shinto practice, even if the Meiji period scholarship or claims would suggest that Imperial-style Shinto has always existed to some extent.

Hansen goes on to state that Hawai`i Daijingū was beholden to multiple authorities in the formative period of Hawaiian Shinto history. The presence of a priest ordained by the Shrine Shinto authorities, a history of influence regarding fox possession, Sect Shinto beliefs, its establishment on the foreign soil of Hawai`i, and its inclusion of American Presidents and Hawaiian Kings as *kami* position Hawai`i Daijingū as quite unique. In the histories described in chapter 2, this is not entirely unique to Daijingū, as

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<sup>134</sup>Hansen, Wilburn. "Examining Prewar Tôgô Worship in Hawaii Toward Rethinking Hawaiian Shinto as a New Religion in America." *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 14, no. 1 (2010): 67-92.

Izumo Taisha Mission and KJDT both include the Hawai`i *Ubusuna-no-Kami*, and reportedly had American Presidents included in their shrines as part of an Americanization effort. The degree to which George Washington and King Kamehameha are included at Hawai`i Daijingū is, however, unparalleled as far as Hawaiian Shinto is concerned. The shrine advertises these figures as venerated still today, and Hansen's argument for the shrine as a New Religion is in part dependent on the nontraditional veneration of American territory politicians and royalty.

Finally, Hansen's description of the Admiral Tōgō worship rituals posits the shrine as an opportunistic community, not as a subordinate to the *kokutai* agenda of Shrine Shinto. Hawai`i Daijingū engaged in a ritual honoring the naval officer, but not for nationalistic purposes. Instead, the shrine was catering to Japanese navy officers who were in Hawai`i in the early 1930s. In an effort to encourage donations from the navy officers, the shrine hosted the Tōgo ritual in the interest of taking advantage of the religious market presented to it. Here, Hansen argues that Hawai`i Daijingū is a New Religion on the basis of the aforementioned premises, and claims that any perceived allegiance to State Shinto or the Japanese Empire was purely for the sake of survival. It is obvious that, in subsequent years, the parishioners of Hawai`i Daijingu, among those of other shrines, distanced themselves from anything associated with either State Shinto or allegiance to the Japanese empire.

From these three sources regarding New Religions, and the extensive background history of KJDT, there is some validity to the categorization of KJDT as an NRM. Relying on these definitions and histories, the goal of this chapter is not necessarily to

claim outright that the category of NRM must be applied to KJDT, but that the label is readily applicable based on the aforementioned models and definitions. There are obvious overlaps between the evolution and sociopolitical standing of KJDT and the definitions of cult, sect, and ethnic new religion outlined here. Beginning generally from the theory of religion and from definitions posed by Stark and Bainbridge, KJDT was an imported tradition upon the construction and organization of its initial community. The terms sect and cult alone are somewhat problematic, as neither exactly describes KJDT accurately throughout the twentieth century. However, in ways reminiscent of Christian-influenced NRMs like Mormonism, KJDT's identifiable traits have changed over time. Differing slightly from Stark and Bainbridge's exact definitions of sect, KJDT did not seek to reform a movement by way of a schismatic religious split, but intended to establish a remote religious community as a result of the diaspora's needs. The immigration of *Gannenmono* and *Isei* to Hawai'i was the result of labor negotiations, and the immigrants themselves sought economic gain. These laborers wanted to establish religious communities in a foreign land to reconnect to something familiar, meaning the Shinto practiced in their respective villages and prefectures, and as a result developed something new. In the case of KJDT, there were obvious tensions with the surrounding sociocultural environment in the early-through-mid-1900s, and there was a shift that occurred naturally as a result of the labor diaspora in Hawai'i. This schism, however subtle, is present in the form of the inclusion of the Hawai'i *Ubusuna-no-Kami*, which implies the significance that land and location has in Shinto. Because Shinto is a tradition so rooted in respect for nature, the change in location from Japan to Hawai'i is a change in what particular piece



of the natural world is being honored. On Hawaiian soil, KJDT also fits the Stark and Bainbridge definition of cult in these ways.

With regard to the cult label, KJDT was indeed a foreign tradition that had, on a superficial level, little in common with the dominant faiths in Hawai'i. Over time, the tension between KJDT and the surrounding community did subside, and the population of the cult community grew to a level of relative stability, embedding itself in the foreign religious landscape in the process. Within the framework of Stark and Bainbridge, there are some issues of applicability with the categorization of cult, since a cult movement, audience cults, and client cults are the main three subdivisions offered in their NRM research. Client cults offer spiritual compensators in the form of services, in instances like Transcendental Meditation or the long trending pseudo-spiritual yogic practices offered in the United States and elsewhere. Client cults provide spiritual or metaphysical compensators for their members, but do so almost exclusively in the context of a free market. Client cults also do not typically limit membership, and a person may be a member of two or three cults at a time without social religious consequence. Audience cults are, as the name implies, are made up of passive members who are not required to contribute funds to the cult. Examples of this given are groups like consumer astrologists, who consume literature about a system of belief from no definite source, but are compensated with metaphysical explanations for the human experience. Members of these kinds of audience cults may have opportunities to contribute funds to one publisher or reader of astrological signs, but the cult is highly decentralized and generalized.

Neither client nor audience cults have any meaningful application for KJDT. It is important to mention these categories because they are the specific examples that Stark and Bainbridge have in mind when carving out a definition for cults in general. While the umbrella definition is suited for KJDT at least in part, audience and client cults are wholly misrepresentative of KJDT. The final subdivision, cult movements, has some definitional application to KJDT, and offers compensators similar to those found across all religions. Cult movements typically do not allow dual membership in other traditions, but members of a cult movement can live without much sociocultural tension with nonmembers. Cult movements can have a range of commitment, both in terms of monetary contribution and time or totally devoting one's life to a cult movement. On the low commitment end, and both high and low tension ends of the spectrum, KJDT conforms in the following respects: 1) There are regular, organized meetings of the members conducted by the leader; 2) The tradition is foreign, and experiences some sociocultural tension varying greatly over time as a result of its foreign origins; 3) The group offers the religious compensators of metaphysical other-worldly promises in the form of blessings, appeasing and placating the *kami* for luck and for prosperity, and paying homage to the Japanese ancestry of the community. As previously discussed, Stark and Bainbridge generally do not account for the notion of ethnic NRMs, and make only cursory remarks about import traditions like KJDT. At this point, the limits of the Stark and Bainbridge framework for NRMs have been reached, and certain aspects of their definitions apply to both KJDT and Hawaiian Shinto.

To address the remaining claims about New Religions, Melton and Bromley's commentary about ethnic religions fill the conceptual holes present within the Stark and Bainbridge framework. The term "ethnic religion" aligns quite neatly with the observable traits of KJDT in the following ways: 1) The ethnic religion is transplanted or imported by an ethnic minority in a larger host community; 2) The groups tend to confine their practice to a specific cultural and linguistic group, although the group eventually incorporates the host nation's language into the community; 3) Communities of ethnic religious peoples do not actively proselytize members of the host community, but instead focus on the ethnic minority population, gradually accruing larger societal influence over generations. From what has been documented here about KJDT and Hawaiian Shinto history, the ethnic religion label seems adequate. This definition does, however, lack any meaningful description of how the ethnic religions engages with the surrounding community. In defining other NRMs, Bromley and Melton explain this engagement in similar fashion as Stark and Bainbridge, describing styles of proselytization or demographics of the participants in various religious practices. Because the ethnic tradition is limited to an ethnic population and typically does not proselytize, little is said about how the community exists in contrast to others. Particularly in the case of Hawaiian Shinto shrines, the story of these religious communities cannot be adequately told without some description of historical persecution and internment. For these reasons and more, neither the ethnic tradition, sect, or cult label satisfies as a definition for KDJT.

Instead, a synthesis of these frameworks is most befitting of Hawaiian Shinto, and KJDT. Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu is an imported ethnic religion from Japan to

Hawai`i, which was subjected to treatment as a threatening cult of the State Shinto project during the Second World War, but it eventually settled into the pattern of a Hawaiian-influenced sectarian shrine. Traditional definitions for Shrine or Sect Shinto are, as outlined in chapter 1, inadequate for assessing the uniquely Hawaiian influences at KJDT. Instead, the ethnic sectarian import label befits KJDT in describing its minority status in the Hawaiian religious landscape, and condenses the stories of the many transplanted *kami* into a simplified phrase. Furthermore, while Hansen's hypothesis about Hawai`i Daijingu pertains specifically to that shrine and not to KJDT, elements of his claims about a nontraditional pantheon apply to KJDT as well.

Along with the *Ubusuna-no-Kami* of Hawai`i, Rev. Takizawa was not ready to entirely dismiss other nontraditional worship. When asked if KJDT at one point practiced veneration of George Washington or King Kamehameha the Great, the reverend stated:

It is possible. When the shrine was taken by the F.B.I., there are some things, documents that were taken. It was common during that time to fly the American flag and keep pictures of Jefferson, Washington, Kalakaua, and Kamehameha. While I do not know for sure, maybe our shrine did the same. Maybe not to the same extent as (Hawai`i) Daijingu, but we don't know for sure.<sup>135</sup>

While this statement from Rev. Takizawa does not conclusively connect KJDT to the hypothesis about Hawai`i Daijingu proposed by Hansen, it keeps the door open for further historical investigation on the issue. It would appear that the reverend and his wife were not eager to align with Hawai`i Daijingu, as both explained that KJDT and Izumo

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<sup>135</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.

Taisha's priests were higher-ranked and completed training and study as priests.<sup>136</sup> More than distancing themselves from Hawai'i Daijingu, any mention of possible NRM labels or even other Japanese religious traditions affiliated with the parent shrines of KJDT in Japan were met with some degree of aversion. When asked about the syncretic *Shugendō* tradition and its relationship to the Konpira shrine in Japan, Rev. Takizawa explained that he was aware of a dissolved relationship between *Shugendō* and the Konpira shrine.<sup>137</sup> These lines of questioning were not pressed to avoid imposition, but the tone of the reverend's response is worth noting. It follows that the Takizawas may not want to be affiliated with any controversial labels like NRM or being affiliated with a formerly outlawed religious tradition, but these topics deserve further attention in future studies of both Hawaiian Shinto and KJDT specifically.

### **The Purpose of Definitions and their Application in Religious Scholarship**

Simply categorizing KJDT as a Hawaiian-influenced ethnic sect may not have any value to practitioners, and may even be unwelcome to some. The question remains, why do these specific categorizations matter? What does the specificity do for the religious tradition, its patrons, or similarly oriented scholarship? A great deal of time has been

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<sup>136</sup> Crum, Richard. Interview with Masa and Irene Takizawa. Personal interview. Honolulu, HI. October 30th, 2017.

<sup>137</sup> *Shugendō* is a tradition that began in the late Heian period, that combined elements of Shinto, Buddhism, Daoism, and other folk religions centered on mountain veneration and the acquisition of supernatural powers. During the organization of religions and the redefinition of Shrine and Sect Shinto, *Shugendō* was officially abolished. Despite being abolished, the tradition persists in influencing Japanese religious groups to this day. See Hardacre's chapter on the Heian period, as well as Miyamoto Keao's entry on <http://eos.kokugakuin.ac.jp/>.

devoted here wrestling with competing definitions of Shinto, religion, and New Religions. Defining a tradition as one type of Shinto or another may be of little use to those who practice the tradition, and only further subdivides traditions. Fundamental questions of definition drive scholarship, however, and it is beneficial for religious scholarship in particular to explicate exactly what one means when using broad terms like Shinto, or even more broadly, religion. Even within the context of historical Shinto, there is a great deal of disagreement about when Shinto began and what exactly it is, as is evidenced by Thomas's review of recent Shinto publications from 2017.<sup>138</sup> These differences of scholarly opinion are greatly influenced, as discussed in chapter 1, by conceptual and ideological differences regarding religion. Hawaiian Shinto challenges and broadens existing definitions of NRMs, and adds greater context to scholarship on overseas shrines. There is an outlined gap in scholarship about Hawaiian Shinto articulated in Nakajima's research, though Gomes bridged the historical gap in part through his research. Telling a general history of Hawaiian Shinto does not, however, give particular insights into the unique traits and stories of each of the surviving shrines, and only Kinjo offers such research in English. It is in the specificity of the scope of this research that new definitions for Shinto outside Japan arise, and this is a product of these past contributions. Thanks to the historical work done by the handful of aforementioned scholars, it is possible to begin a new conversation in Religious Studies. To address the utility of labels or categorization, it is because academics propose definitions and argue

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<sup>138</sup> Jolyon B. Thomas. Review of Multiple Authors H-Japan, H-Net Reviews. November, 2017.

their merit that we continue to deepen our understanding of the religions of the world.

The argument here for KJDT being a sectarian new religious group in Hawai'i is supported by a singular interpretation of these fundamental definitions of religion, Shinto, and NRMs. If there is any opposition, hopefully the conversation can continue regardless, and a more perfect understanding of the narratives and influences at play may be constructed.

At the very least, it is clear that the frameworks proposed by scholars of NRMs are applicable to the Hawaiian Shinto shrines, and that some aspects of KJDT's history and present characteristics actually align with these frameworks. The most exciting and provocative moment of the interview process conducted with Rev. Takizawa was his willingness to liken himself to a Hawaiian *kahuna*. It is without a doubt that the Takizawa family and many of the benefactors of KJDT would argue that the Shinto beliefs and rituals at KJDT are nearly identical to what happens in Japan. While this may be the position of the practitioners, it is not the job of an argumentative piece of scholarship to avoid contradicting the claims of observed subjects. Instead, it is from these interviews and the shrine's history that the label of Hawaiian-influenced sectarian Shinto is born; the practitioners may disagree, but the label is intended to clarify and illuminate rather than to offend or antagonize. If someone comes across a Hawaiian Shinto shrine, there is an observable, physical difference between a Hawaiian shrine and a Japanese shrine; the Hawaiian shrines is in the islands of Hawai'i, the people coming to the shrine are commonly less culturally Japanese, and English is heard as often if not more often than Japanese. Underneath these observable material differences, the differences in *kami*

(including the possibility of American presidents and King Kamehameha the Great), the motivation for founding the shrines, and the hostile treatment of the shrines as ideological threats further demonstrate that Hawaiian Shinto was something new and different. Many festivals and rituals overlap with Shinto shrines outside Japan, and the respective founding diaspora communities are all as unique and thought-provoking as KJDT. The unique story of KJDT and its people are the inspiration for the preceding claims about Hawaiian Shinto and NRMs, and there is much more to be excavated in this area of study than can be done here.



## CONCLUSION

### Comments on New Religions, and KJDT

The study of New Religions is a stigma-laden area within religious studies; some groups categorized as New Religious movements like *Aum Shinrikyo* or Jim Jones' People's Temple produce tragedies carried out by charismatic cult leaders. These kinds of NRMs deter most people's interest, and the members of other NRMs are often lumped together with violent instigators. Unfortunately, the subject of religion in general is often characterized by a select few radical or violent actors. In reality, however, most new religious organizations and peoples are far less threatening, and far more rational than we might otherwise think. Part of this problem is certainly the fault of academics, many of whom choose to focus on the economically devious nature of groups like client cults, or the grotesque and tragic stories of groups like Heaven's Gate. In truth, many NRMs are made up of less diabolical or sad stories, and imported ethnic movements like KJDT tell a kind of nuanced and compelling story largely unheard within New Religious Studies (NRS).

The claims made in this essay about KJDT as an NRM may very well be too far afield from Japanese religious studies, and perhaps too unremarkable for NRS. From the story of KJDT and Hawaiian Shinto, there are many subtle forces at play influencing the perpetuation of Shinto in Hawai'i, and the study of these subtle forces requires a highly multidisciplinary approach. Scholars of religion are tasked with analyzing texts, exploring history, engaging in sociological surveys, reflecting on human psychology, and in some cases, even the legal and material sciences in their research. It is because of this

mixed methodological arsenal that the study of religion continues to compel innovations. The case of KJDT is a fascinating subject for the NRS methodologies, and expands the limits of some definitions and frameworks.

The impact of Japanese culture and religion in Hawai`i cannot be overstated, as Gomes discusses in the opening chapter of his project, it is largely because of Japanese immigrants that rice is a staple of the Hawaiian diet. While other Japanese religious traditions like Honpa Hongwanji may have cast a wider net than KJDT, Hawaiian Shinto persists as a cultural pillar in the islands. Even if the spotlight only shines on KJDT for *hatsumōde* or for the annual pet blessing ceremony, the shrine and its community represent the deep ties that the Hawaiian Islands have with Japan.

### **Avenues for Further Research, and Closing Thoughts**

There are a few subjects that were beyond the scope of this project that deserve further investigation, and are quite closely related. First, someone with a deeper background in *Shugendō* might find success in further fleshing out the claims stated here about the unique nature of KJDT as a new kind of Shinto sect. While outlawed in the Meiji period, *Shugendō* continues to influence other traditions in Japan, and was highly embedded within the Konpira shrine. Apart from this, a similar research project at Hawai`i Daijingū would fill a massive void. Kinjo's research on Hawai`i Izumo Taishakyo Mission, while not religious in nature, provides a succinct and detailed history that does not exist otherwise in English. With the history portion of this research focused on KJDT, Hawai`i Daijingū is the last major O`ahu shrine (in terms of attendance) to be

researched. Hawai'i Daijingu has also not been researched as a subject of NRS other than Hansen's article.

With regard to other Shinto groups in the United States, the Tsubaki Grand Shrine of America is in need of further investigation. This shrine is unique in that its priest, Rev. Koichi Barrish, is the first ethnically non-Japanese priest to ever be ordained. There are a number of brief articles about the shrine, and one MA thesis. The MA thesis regarding Tsubaki Grand Shrine of America is, unfortunately, incredibly rudimentary in its description of Shinto, and is almost entirely reliant on interviews and field notes. Very little of the research is of any academic interest for Religious Studies or NRS, although it could contribute to a more sophisticated future study. The Tsubaki Grand Shrine of America is a provocative topic regarding Shinto in the United States as an NRM, and to the nature of ethnic import diaspora religions, and is deserving of further investigation.

Other overseas shrines include those discussed with Rev. Takizawa in Brazil, Italy, Peru, Norway, etc. I was unable to find much more than a few publications regarding these overseas shrines, and they likely will add further details to the nature of international Shinto. These shrines add new dimensions to language, culture, and geographical landscapes to the study of international Shinto, which may have developed into something unrecognizable when compared to Shinto in Japan. While previous generations of scholars like Ono Sokyo may describe Shinto as the ethnic religion of the Japanese people, the multiethnic nature of overseas shrines and their patrons suggest otherwise. Japanese culture continues to be held in highest regard in Hawaiian Shinto, but

the future of the tradition may mold and shape it to suit the community in less culturally or nationally oriented ways.

In closing, Shinto manifests itself in ways that reach far beyond the scope of Shrine or Sect Shinto as they were articulated in the Meiji Restoration. Hawaiian Shinto is one major example of how the tradition can move across an ocean, and bloom as a new tradition in a new soil. The continued study of Japanese Religions and NRMs will find bits and pieces of Shinto across the globe, and Hawai'i is a major recipient of Japanese cultural importation. Hawai'i Kotohira Jinsha Dazaifu Tenmangu is the product of a fascinating story of immigration, construction, tension, and reinvention. What began as a community effort to connect with Japanese tradition in a faraway land has truly become *kama'aina* after more than a century of survival on O'ahu.

### **Personal Statement, and Connection to KJDT**

On a personal note, it is by luck that I was able to get to know Rev. Takizawa, Mrs. Takizawa, and the many others interviewed in this research. Years ago, I had a close friend who was also a scholar of religion, and her family was major benefactors to KJDT. At that time, I volunteered for a couple of New Year's services and pet blessings, and learned about the shrine from the inside. It is because of this familiarity that I have with the shrine and some of its major players that I was able to get virtually unlimited access to interviews, festivals, and details for my research. I am not a regular patron of the shrine, but was very fortunate to have a relationship with some of the KJDT members, and could not have conducted this project without their support and openness.

Throughout the course of the project, I maintained a professional distance for the purposes of scholarly integrity, but have always felt very welcomed by the members of KJDT. None of the research was conducted in any capacity as a volunteer, but now that the project is over I plan to volunteer again if given the opportunity. If the Takizawa family asks it of me, I will also submit a copy of this project for them to keep for their records. It has been one of the great joys of my life to learn from the Takizawa family, and to research the history of their community.

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